

Covington crossroads

by

Gwen Keys Hitt



• **A History of Covington County, Mississippi** •

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DEDICATION

This first history of Covington County is dedicated to the 251 resource individuals who made it possible. Their names are listed in the appendix.

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PREFACE

As far as an author is concerned a book is never completed and certainly not a book with a scope of almost 200 years and a list of characters in the hundreds. To write the complete history of Covington County would take volumes and volumes. Each church, cemetery, school, business, and community deserves its own book. Likewise, each family has more stories than could ever be written. I simply had to stop collecting and writing and get on with putting an initial history into print.

Covington County is one of the first Mississippi counties (1819), but we have never had our history written and published. This book is an attempt to remedy that situation. So many stories have already been lost, as they were buried with their tellers. Still other stories have been burned in the records of the two courthouse fires at the county seat of Williamsburg.

As I interviewed over 250 people, and sifted through church histories, Works Projects Administration (WPA) writings, and the few books that include references to our area I was reminded that our development is very similar to other counties in the Piney Woods. Our early settlers were, for the most part, citizens of the Carolinas, Virginia and Georgia, who were searching for a new beginning for their families.

These early settlers found a land covered with virgin timber, laced with cool creeks, and inhabited by a small band of Choctaw Indians. Treaties gradually pushed the Indians farther west and the homesteaders began the process of building a life out of the wooded wilderness. The War Between the States and the subsequent Reconstruction slowed the process considerably and it was not until the coming of the railroad in 1899 that the economic picture brightened.

Eight or nine large lumber mills were quickly built, mostly along the railroad track, and workers and their families, just as quickly, came to claim jobs. In 15-20 years, when the timber was depleted, the

jobs vanished with the mills. The people who remained then returned to the denuded and barren land in an effort to support their families.

During the first half of the 20th century our people were called upon to fight, or to support those who fought, in two major world wars. Through the trials and turmoils of settling a wilderness, reclaiming a desolate land and fighting three wars Covington Countians have persisted; they have not given up nor given in. The lights of fame and fortune have not burned very brightly, but the lights have never totally gone out either. There was always a dedicated mother, father, preacher, farmer, teacher, businessman, doctor or public official that kept the flame glowing, albeit, sometimes ever so faintly. It is for these determined, dedicated people that this book is written.

Our county's story is mainly that of our churches, our schools, our communities and our families, for these are the values that we cherish. People and places are important to Southerners and Covington Countians are no exception. After being introduced to a stranger, the first question we usually ask is, "Who are you?" (meaning "Who are your kinfolks?") and the second is usually, "Where are you from?" (meaning "Where are your roots?"). We like a feeling of continuity.

During the fifteen months that I worked on this book I talked with many Covington Countians and I discovered that primarily, those people who are interested in preserving our past are also the ones who are working diligently to insure a progressive, positive future. They are continuing the dedicated and determined spirit of the early settlers. They love this county even though they realize, that like any other human venture, it has shortcomings. Old times here are not forgotten, because these citizens are helping to preserve the best of the past for our posterity.

We do have a goodly, Godly heritage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book became a glimmer in my “mind’s eye” in August of 1984, as I worked temporarily at *The News Commercial* in Collins. I approached the paper’s editor, Mrs. James D. Arrington, with the idea for a short column each week about our various communities within the county. At the time I had a list of about 25 communities.

She agreed to the idea and I began to do research. We knew almost immediately that a “short column” was impossible and my list of communities gradually grew to 89. Mrs. Arrington and her staff (Jamie Arrington, Pam Johnson, Jimmy Goff, Elizabeth Sanders, Dick Tarbutton, and Lola Logan) have continued to be encouraging and supportive throughout the process. Much of the material in this book was first published in *The News Commercial*. At a later stage, Pam Johnson edited much of the material before it was sent to the book printer. Pam also came up with the idea for the title, “Covington Crossroads.”

The main reason that the writing of this book was possible is because of the superb cooperation of the more than 250 people who gave me ideas, materials, photos and who so graciously answered my seemingly endless list of questions.

When interest in the newspaper stories seemed to warrant the printing of a book, I was fortunate enough to find, with the help of Dr. Jim Bishop, Ed Bozeman of the University of Southern Mississippi Printing Department Staff who agreed to publish the book. Ed was not only willing, but eager, to work on the project and his expertise and guidance have been invaluable. He and his conscientious staff have been totally dedicated to making this a “first rate book.”

Finally, I want to thank my family for allowing me time to interview, research, and write. As always, they carried me through with their love and good spirits.



Section I

COVINGTON COUNTY'S FIRST FAMILIES—THE CHOCTAW INDIANS

The Choctaw Indians probably lived for more than 4,000 years on the land we now call home. They lived in close harmony with their piney woods environment and were careful not to abuse its resources.

Tradition tells us that all the Indians in North and South America traveled from Siberia into Alaska about 15,000 years ago by way of a land bridge. They gradually drifted down to the top of South America. Legend says that two brothers, Chickasaw and Choctaw, were leading with the guidance of a long staff. Each night the staff was left standing upright in the ground and the direction it leaned toward in the morning was the direction they traveled that day.

Supposedly, when they reached the Nanih Waiya mound (near Noxapater) the staff stood upright and this is where they stayed. The mound became the most sacred spot to the Indians of this area.

The mound is the second largest in the state and is 40-50 feet high and covers one acre. Stories vary as to uses of the mounds. Some were undoubtedly burial grounds, but they could also have been built for look-out purposes and for protection during a flood.

The Chickasaws and the Choctaws later separated, and the Choctaws moved into the southern half of Mississippi and adjacent parts of Alabama.

John Redmon of Seminary, an Indian lore enthusiast, says that evidence of Indian campsites can be found in almost every part of Covington County, but are

most numerous along the banks of Okatoma Creek.

These peaceful, farming people looked for locations where a clear running stream merged with a smaller stream, and they built their settlements on the high side of the bank. This location offered more safety in time of flooding.

Wallace Allred of Collins, another Indian enthusiast, believes the waterways were much wider and deeper during the Indians time, making it easier for the Indians to maneuver their dugout canoes than would seem possible today.

Redmon says the presence of "bear grass" (yucca) is another good sign that Indians once used a particular area. The bear grass was very important to the Choctaws, as they used it for anything where a thread or small rope was needed, such as baskets, hanging meats, weaving cloth, etc.

Using these guidelines, it is possible to begin looking for Indian rock. Redmon says the finding of "sawdust" or rock chips probably means the Indians actually lived there, and were not just passing through. The chips would be the parts of the flint that were broken off in the making of their tools. The tools were fashioned by hitting two stones together until the desired shape was obtained. Animal horns may also have been used to shape the arrowheads, spears, knives, and farming implements.

W. R. Willoughby of First Street in Collins has found some arrowheads and a necklace pendant in his yard. He also has

some Indian rock that was found during the site excavation for the Piggly-Wiggly and Bill's Dollar Store Shopping Center in Collins.

Willoughby's says that there probably was an Indian camp on the ridge above the Okatoma Creek between Highway 84 and 588.

The Indian groups (really large families) seemed to have moved seasonally in order to find wild berries, vegetables and game. According to Mrs. John Redmon, they would also leave a location when it became too dirty.

Their dwellings were made of poles and vines dabbled with mud. They also made a kind of lean-to between two trees with poles and branches.

The men wore loin cloths and the women, one piece dresses made from two pieces of skins. They made cloaks from a net fabric that had feathers woven in for warmth.

According to the book, *Mississippi A Guide To The Magnolia State*, the crops they grew would be familiar to us today. The staple crop was corn, with beans, pumpkins, melons, potatoes (sweet and white) and squash also being planted. Tobacco was raised as a luxury for the men only. Since the Indians had no domesticated animals, all of the farming was done by hand.

The most important game animals in ancient times were the deer and the bison. The bison is supposed to have been driven out of Mississippi in the 1700s by a great drought. The Indians also hunted bear and turkey, but the small animals were left for the boys to hunt. They were careful not to overhunt an area, and at times would make game preserves. Fish were caught with hooks, shot with arrows or speared, often at night with the help of fire.

The women's jobs were primarily those of cooking, weaving, basket making, pottery making, tending the fields and caring for the children. Nelda Mitchell of Collins has done research into the tribal practices of child-caring and she found the children received constant attention. They were sung to often and were rubbed daily with oil to make their bodies more flexible and to prevent insect bites. The babies were carried on the mothers' backs and fresh-shredded bark or dried moss was used for diapers.

According to John K. Bettersworth's *Mississippi The Land and The People*, the Choctaws, being peaceful farmers, had much time for singing, dancing, and playing games. They had a type of ballgame that is still played by their descendants today using a football type goal and webbed rackets and is similar to lacrosse.



Choctaw Indian Missionary Dr. Shaw Gaddy (center) shows a hand-woven Choctaw Indian basket to members of Mt. Olive's Cub Scout Pack 7 Saturday, Sept. 15, 1984 at a District Camporee held at Dry Creek Water Park. The Cubs are (from left) Jeff O'Neal, Travis Elmore and Brian Sprayberry. (Photo by Gwen Keys Hitt)

The Choctaw language was one of 750 dialects present at the time of Columbus' discovery of the new world. One of the interesting words was the greeting, "bobashela." This word could mean hello, goodbye or how are you.

The peaceful existence of the Indians was first disturbed in 1540 when a group of Spaniards, lead by the explorer, DeSoto, came to the Mississippi area. The explorers came hunting gold, but instead found only pearls. They left behind the Spanish hog and many European diseases. When the next white men came to the Mississippi area 130 years later, the diseases had killed all but one-fifth of the native population. In 1700 there were 30,000 Indians in Mississippi—of which 20,000 were Choctaws.

The Choctaws were considered one of the five civilized tribes since they so quickly learned the ways of the white man. But as more white settlers came, the Indians were pushed farther and farther from their land.

According to Dr. Shaw Gaddy, a Methodist Missionary who presently works with the Choctaws in Neshoba County, the Choctaws began to surrender their land in 1805 and were moved to Oklahoma. A little more than 25 years later, neither the



The bear grass (yucca) plant was very necessary to the early Choctaw Indians who lived in the Covington County area. It was used as thread, made into rope or woven into baskets. The rope was needed to hang meats, build shelters, and weave cloth. The presence of bear grass in a location today is a good indication that Indians may have once camped nearby. (photo by Gwen Keys Hitt.)

Chickasaws nor the Choctaws held any land east of the Mississippi. Approximately 3,000 Choctaws refused to leave and their descendants now live in eight reservations in our state.

RESOURCES

John Redmon, Wallace Allred, W. R. Willoughby, Mrs. John Redmon, Mississippi, A Guide to the Magnolia State, Nelda Mitchell, and Dr. Shaw Gaddy.

THE ORGANIZATION OF COVINGTON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Covington County was established by an act of the Mississippi State Legislature on January 5, 1819. The act was approved on February 5, 1819 by Gov. David Holmes. The county was formed from the larger counties of Lawrence and Wayne. The northern and southern boundary lines of the county are generally the same today as when formed, but a portion of the eastern section was removed in 1826 to form part of Jones County and a portion of the western section was removed in 1906 to form Jefferson Davis County.

According to Dunbar Rowland in *Encyclopedia of Mississippi History*, the county was named for Gen. Leonard Covington, a native of Maryland. Covington entered the United States Army in 1792 in the Light Dragoons and was promoted rapidly to lieutenant and captain. He had a horse shot from under him at Fort Recovery, Ohio and was distinguished for gallantry at the Battle of the Maumee, 1794.

He resigned from the army in 1795 and returned to Maryland where he was elected to Congress from the St. George District. He rejoined the army when there was danger of war with England in 1809, as a colonel of the Light Dragoons.

For a time, he was stationed in the Mississippi Territory and Gov. Holmes

called him into consultation at the beginning of war with the Creek Indians.

He was promoted to brigadier general on August 1, 1813, and was called to the Canadian frontier where he participated in the unfortunate campaign of General Wilkinson there.

Covington was riding a white charger and cheering his men to attack the British entrenchments at the Battle of Chrysler's Field on November 11, 1813, when he was seriously wounded. He died three days later.

The act that established Covington County had five sections. The first section gave the location of the county. The second section stated that the courts "shall be holden in the county of Covington, twice in each year, at the places provided for by this act."

The third section stated that "until the commissioners shall fix upon a permanent site for the seat of justice, the place of holding court therein, shall be at the house of Doctor Shelton."

Section four provided for all court records in Lawrence and Wayne to be removed to Covington County if the defendants were now residents of the new county.

Section five appointed as commissioners Edward Terrell, James Hambrick, Gowin

Harris, Henry Ashton and Thomas Colbert. They were charged with "Fixing a public site for the seat of justice within four or five miles of the centre of said county."

SPEEDTOWN

The site chosen to be the county seat was on the William Speed place, near Eminence about six miles east of Collins. The first court was held under a Magnolia tree as there were no county buildings. The county officials conducted business at their homes and kept the records at their homes. Any prisoners were chained to a tree since there was no jail.

The first officials of the county were John Shipp, John Snow, Thomas Colbert, Isaac Bowles, and Joseph McAfee, chief justices; William Reed, sheriff; A. M. McPherson, counselor; Stephen Sheldon, clerk and coroner; Norvell Robertson, treasurer, John Graves, surveyor; Norvell Robertson, ranger; John B. Law, John C. Thomas, Uriah Flowers, A. L. Hatten and Duncan Thompson, Justices of the Peace; and Richard Flowers and William Duckworth, constables.

Sometime in the early 1820s, a crude log house was built to serve as the court house. It was made by driving several posts into the ground and erecting a brush arbor over them. According to a WPA writer, as late

as 1939 the rust-eaten key to this first courthouse was still in the possession of members of the Speed family.

According to the 1820 United States census, the population of Covington County was 2,230. 1,824 were white and 406 were non-white. Some of the names on the county tax roll in 1821 were Rogers, Duckworth, Speed, Terrell, Hall, Berry, Pope, Todd, Graves, Williamson, Jones, Evans, Robertson, Knight, Ragan, Loftin, Gieger, Reed, Kelly, Aultman and Cranford.

An act on January 17, 1823, by the Mississippi Legislature took a portion of Covington County and established a new county, Bainbridge. The county was short-lived as another act on January 21, 1824 repealed the act and ordered all court papers to be returned to Covington County.

The boundary lines of Covington County were again changed in 1826, when Jones County was formed from part of the eastern section of Covington. This change remained.

COUNTY SEAT CHANGED TO WILLIAMSBURG

Due to the removal of part of the county, Speedtown was no longer the geographical center of Covington County. By another act of the Legislature on January 23, 1824, five men were appointed commissioners to locate a county seat and secure not less than twenty acres, nor more than eighty, on which to erect a courthouse and jail. The commissioners were Adam Shows, Samuel Funches, John Terrell, A. L. Hatten, and John McDuff.

Williamsburg was selected for the site, as it was already a small settlement and almost the center of the county. On February 25, 1829, Silas and Isla Bullock deeded 42 acres to the commissioners for the new courthouse. They were paid one-fourth of the net proceeds of the sales of the lots in Williamsburg. The Bullocks donated the part of the town known as the Public Square.

The first courthouse was built in 1830 by Neil Mathison of the Dry Creek Community (now known as Lone Star Community). The location was at approximately the present site of Mooney's Furniture Store. (Mooney's is housed in the building once used for Williamsburg School.)

This wooden frame courthouse was destroyed by fire in the winter of 1853-54. Most reports blame the fire on a faulty chimney, but a WPA writer in the 30s says that a group of gamblers were in an upstairs room and caused the fire. Whatever the reason, all of the county records were destroyed.

The Board of Police, now called the Board of Supervisors, convened in the Olive Branch Masonic Lodge Hall at Williamsburg on February 20, 1854, to

transact business and continued to use the hall until the new courthouse was built.

On November 11, 1854, the Board of Police appointed a courthouse building committee. They were Dan McLaurin, T. H. Watts, B. S. Hathorn, Wilson Price, and Willis Barnes. The building was to be paid for by a special tax.

Neil Mathison, the contractor for the first courthouse, was also selected to build the second one. This structure was two-storied and also made of wood. A small brick building was erected nearby and was used for the chancery clerk's records. A jail was also built nearby. This small wooden building, called the "cell," had a bit of concrete in the center of the floor and was, for the prisoners, a big improvement over being chained to a tree.

Tom Carr planted water oak trees around the new public square and he was paid 25¢ per tree. Some of these beautiful oaks remain today.

From the years 1850-1900 Williamsburg was the most important town in the county. Among its early settlers were the Burkhalers, Carters, Deeses, Holcombs, Eatons, McLaurins, Falers, Norwoods, Bullocks, Lotts, Duckworths, and Rutlands. By 1890 Williamsburg was a thriving little town—there were eight or nine stores, five star-mail routes, six lawyers, two newspapers, and several doctors.

The first church to be built in the town, the Catholic Church, was erected by Adam Faler. Baptist and Methodist churches were quick to follow. The Catholic church was destroyed by fire about 1920.

COUNTY SEAT CHANGED TO COLLINS

The building of the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad in 1899 was the beginning of the end for the town of Williamsburg. The railroad missed the town by about two miles and soon stores and businesses began to move the two miles to what was called Williamsburg Depot.

It was not long before there was a movement to try to change the county seat from Williamsburg to one of the towns on the railroad. The towns of Seminary, Mount Olive and Collins were all considered as possible sites.

At about the same time, the Legislature was considering forming Jefferson Davis County out of the western part of Covington County.

Feelings about the change of the county seat became very heated and it is generally believed that an arsonist was paid \$20 to burn the Williamsburg Courthouse on December 5, 1904.

In an effort to calm the situation, the state legislature established two court districts with one courthouse at Seminary and another at Collins. The governor

AN ACT

To divide the counties of Lawrence and Wayne, and form a new county out of the same.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi, in General Assembly convened, That all that tract of country, lying within the following boundaries, to wit: Beginning on the eastern boundary of the eighteenth range line, where it intersects the southern boundary line of Lawrence county, thence north along the said range line, to its intersection with the dividing Ridge, between the waters of Leaf and Pearl Rivers; thence, along the summit of said Ridge, to its intersection with the Choctaw boundary line; thence eastwardly, along

the said Choctaw boundary line, to the eastern boundary of the tenth range line; thence south, along the said range line, to its intersection with the northern boundary of Green county; thence west, along the said line, to the corner of the said county of Green; thence, along the fifth parallel Township line, to where the same, intersects the eighteenth range line, shall form a new county, to be called and known by the name of Covington.

Sec. 2. And be it further enacted, That courts shall be holden in the county of Covington, twice in each year, at the places provided for by this act, for that purpose, at the time and in the manner following, to wit: The superior courts of law and equity, on the fourth Monday of March and September, and the county courts, on the second Monday in April, July and October; the said superior courts, may be holden six judicial days, at each term, if business so long requires, and no longer.

Sec. 3. And be it further enacted, That until the commissioners, herein after mentioned, shall fix upon a permanent site for the seat of justice, for the above mentioned county of Covington, the place of holding court therein, shall be at the house of Doctor Shelton, or as near the same, as may be: Provided however, That if it should be found to be necessary, the court shall have power and authority to adjourn the court, to meet at some more convenient place contiguous thereto.

Sec. 4. And be it further enacted, That all process now issued and not returned to the superior courts, of Lawrence and Wayne counties, against defendants, residing in the county of Covington, shall be executed and returned in the same manner, as tho' this act, had not passed; and the superior courts of Lawrence and Wayne, at their first term after the passage of this act, shall cause all suits or causes, whatever, depending in said court, and undetermined with all the original papers thereunto belonging, where the defendant, or defendants, reside in the said county of Covington, to be transferred to the superior court of the said county of Covington, there to be proceeded on as though, the same had originated therein.

Sec. 5. And be it further enacted, That Edward Terrell, James Hambrick, Gowin Harris, Henry Ashton and Thomas Colbert, be, and they are hereby, appointed commissioners; and they, or, a majority of them, shall meet so soon as may be, for the purpose of fixing on a public site for the seat of justice of said county; and the place pointed out, by a majority of said commissioners, shall be the seat of justice in said county. Provided however, The said commissioners, shall fix the seat of justice within four or five miles of the centre of said county.

E. TURNER,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

D. STEWART,

Lieut. Governor and President of the Senate.

Approved, the 5th day of February, 1819.

DAVID HOLMES.

Governor of the State of Mississippi.

quickly vetoed the two-courthouse concept.

Williamsburg Depot continued to grow until it had a population of 2,015 in 1905. On November 27, 1906 the name of the new town was changed to Collins (see the entry on Collins for more details). Finally, Collins was officially made the county seat and plans were made to build yet another courthouse.

According to Doyle Keys, the cornerstone of the existing courthouse was laid on Sept. 7, 1907, by the Masonic Grand Master H. G. Yawn, Grand Secretary Frederick Speed and Grand Marshall Graham Robertson. Members of the Board of Supervisors at that time were J. E. Odum, president, W. O. Watts, H. Y. McNair, J. C. Thames, J. S. Welch and J. T. Mathison, clerk.

R. L. Dent and E. L. Dent were county attorneys. The laying of the cornerstone was witnessed by a large group of people, with estimates running from 5,000 to 8,000. Stored in the cornerstone that day were a Holy Bible, lists of grand officers of the lodge, officers of the Collins Lodge and county officers, a copy of the *Collins Commercial* and coins of different countries. The cost of building the courthouse was \$117,000 and it was built by Carr and Company of Atlanta, Georgia.

THE RAILROAD CHANGES THE ENTIRE COUNTY

The Gulf and Ship Island Railroad ran the entire length of the county and little villages began to spring up along its tracks. Lumber companies came in by the dozens to buy the tall virgin timber. The population doubled from 8,299 in 1890 to 16,909 in 1910. Many of these little villages left almost as quickly as they came.

By 1920 many of the lumber companies were already pulling out and leaving the land treeless and unprotected from erosion.

COVINGTON COUNTY HISTORY AS RECORDED IN 1921

The following account was written by Mildred Miller, a tenth grade Collins High School student, soon after the one hundredth birthday of Covington County. This entry on Covington County history was the winning essay in a school contest in 1921.

The early settlers of the county were for the most part from North Carolina. They traveled in caravans and the first to reach the county was composed of thirty-nine persons. Their possessions were brought through with pack horses and hogshead conveyances. The following were among the first thirty-nine settlers: A. L. Hatton, John Colbert, Hansen Allsburry, Aaron Lowe, Frederick Pope, Joseph McAfee, Alexander Harper, Archie McCollum, Peter Fairley, Reuben Watts, Alexander McCloud and Neil Mathison. Also John Ship, who was the first member of the legislature from the county, W. K. Easter-

ling, who was Colonel of an Infantry Regiment during the Civil War, Mr. Rogers, who was the great-grandfather of the present Mr. Ben Rogers, who lives near Collins and Mr. Norvel Robertson, who now lives about seven miles from Collins, and enjoys the distinction of being the oldest living inhabitant of the county.

COUNTY-WIDE "FIRSTS"

The first settlement was six miles east of Williamsburg, near the old Williamsburg and Raleigh road.

The early settlers grew corn, potatoes, peas, oats, rice, and some cotton. After the elapse of several years they began growing sugar cane, which was ground in wooden mills and cooked in pots and kettles. All of the crops were usually gathered and hauled from the field on ground slides. The cotton was gathered by the men through the day, and the lint picked from the seed at night. The men would also tan cowhides and make shoes for their families.

EARLY SCHOOLS

The first public school was out near the old Salem neighborhood. It was conducted by Mr. James Hill. A little log house, with two logs left out of one side for a window, served as this first school house. Mr. Marion Rogers now uses it as a crib.

The first chartered school was at the old Salem church.

Until 1900 the only towns in the county were Williamsburg and Mt. Carmel. The latter enjoyed the distinction of being the wealthiest town in the state for its size. Its main merchants were Holloway & McRaney. William Rutledge, Williams & Sons, and others. In May, 1837, the legislature passed an act creating at Mt. Carmel a "Male and Female Academy," with several of the leading citizens as incorporators.

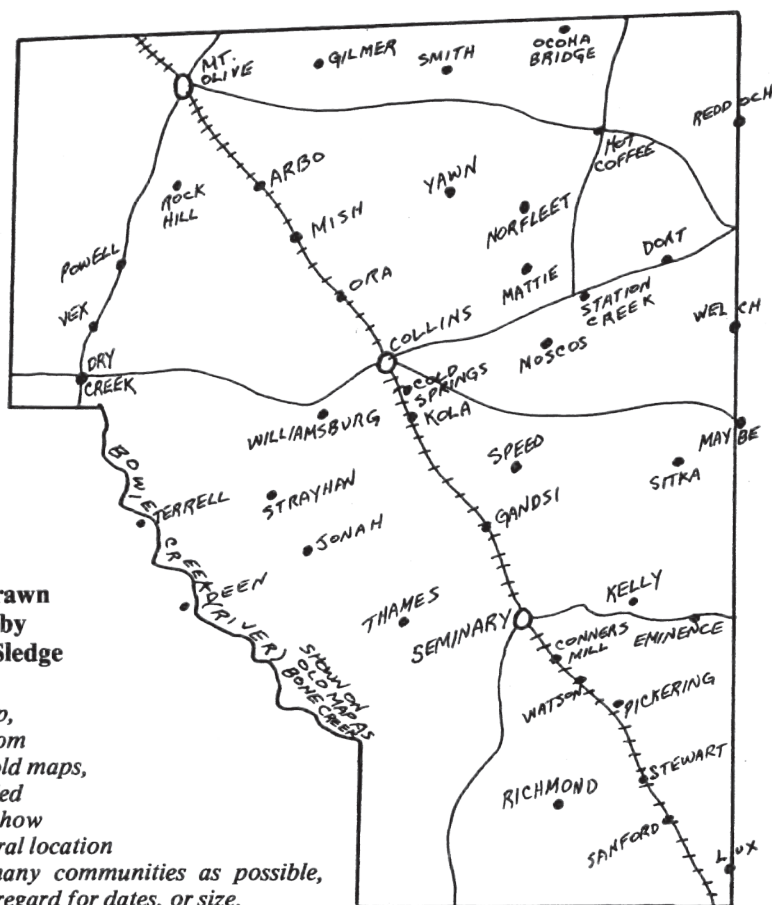
The next educational movement was the establishment of the "Male and Female College" at Williamsburg in 1841.

In 1846 a college of considerable note, the Zion Seminary College, was established by the legislature and was erected where the present Seminary school now stands. The site was selected by Professor Graves of North Carolina. The selection was made on account of the shoals of the Okatoma Creek at that place, and his ideal was to make it a manufacturing point. Many of the state's former able men were graduates from this college. Those coming from distant states in order to reach this place traveled on the overland stage coach running from Natchez to Mobile.

The old Leaf River church was the first church in the county. It was about eight miles east of present Collins. Norvel Robertson and N. L. Clark were the first ministers and N. L. Clark had the honor of

Handdrawn Map by Broox Sledge

This map, taken from several old maps, is intended only to show the general location of as many communities as possible, with no regard for dates, or size.



the Clark Memorial College being named for him.

The first court house was built at Williamsburg in 1826, on lands that were patented by the government in 1828. It stood until 1853, when destroyed by fire, supposed to have originated from gamblers playing in an upper room. In 1854, Mr. Neil Mathison erected the new building for the county on the same site. This building stood until 1904, when it was destroyed by fire, after which the county site was moved to Collins.

Mr. J. T. Duckworth built the first brick building in the county, which was the Sheriff and Clerk's office at old Williamsburg. It was bid off at \$1,700, which then seemed quite a large sum.

The first road was the old Monticello and Raleigh road, which still stands and is called by the same name.

The military road running from Jackson to New Orleans traversed Covington County and crossed Coahay Creek near the present Calhoun Consolidated School, and the timbers over which they crossed this creek are still intact.

The first physicians were Dr. Leverett, who lived near Old Williamsburg, and Dr. Carr, who lived near Mt. Olive. He was the step-father of our noted physician, Dr. C. H. Ramsay.

The first load of dry goods and groceries were hauled into the county by Mr. J. T. Duckworth, to Old Williamsburg, for Sims and Atkinson.

WESTERN UNION AND THE RAILROAD COME

In 1876 and long prior to the entrance of the railroads in the county, a new telegraph company was formed and the line ran from Meridian to New Orleans, passing through Williamsburg. This line was bought by the Western Union Telegraph Company in 1879.

The first and only railroad in the county made its entrance in 1899, and exists by virtue of a charter of 1881. It was known then and now as the Gulf & Ship Island Railroad.

The first cotton gin, lumber mill, and mill to grind wheat were owned by Mr. Richard Webster, who lived three miles east of present Collins.

Mr. Ben Leonard owned the first circular saw in the county. He lived near Mt. Olive.

In April 1854, Reuben Watts, Sheriff of the county, filed the only report in the history of the county, as tax collector, showing no delinquent tax payers.

The only officer ever assassinated was G. R. Webster, Sheriff of the county. It was on Sunday night, Aug. 8, 1891, as he stepped out on the front porch for a drink of water, preparatory for retiring, that he was shot and killed.



These six men were the Covington County officials in 1906. It is believed that this photograph was taken in a tent that was being used until the courthouse could be built at Collins. The men are (back row, left to right) W. L. Magee, Deputy Sheriff; Tom Thames, Superintendent of Education; and John Mathison, Chancery Clerk; (front row left to right) B. F. Lott, Sheriff; V. T. Dees, Circuit Clerk; and Daniel Calhoun, Treasurer. (Photo courtesy of the Covington County Chancery Clerk, Lynn Mayfield.)

On April 29, 1854, Sam Stewart was granted the first liquor license, authorizing him to sell whiskey in Lot three, square four, in Williamsburg. He was required to give a \$500 bond and paid a privilege tax of \$50.

The first colored person to buy a marriage license in this county was old Uncle George Duckworth four years before the Civil War.

The first iron safe was brought into the county and delivered October 31, 1855. It was the property of the county and remain-

ed in Williamsburg until a few years ago, when parties undertook to convey it out of the county, and on account of its great weight, the wagon broke and it has lain by the side of the road west of Williamsburg, for a number of years.

The wealth of the county has materially increased as well as taxation. In 1860 the total tax collection was \$1,576.08. In that year the county had within it only eleven slaves. All of the horses, mules and slaves carried a total valuation of \$4,000.

There were only three clocks in the coun-

ty in 1860. The first piano brought into the county reached Mt. Carmel overland from Mobile, in 1857, and in 1860 only four had been brought in.

The soil of the county is for the most part of a sandy loam with a good clay foundation. Near the creeks, lowlands exist and are mostly of the same nature, but in places a light black land exists. The county in part is broken land, while the greater portion is what is usually termed rolling lands. It is interspersed with ever running creeks and is well watered.

The climate of the county is temperate and healthful. Snow rarely occurs and during the hottest weather the temperature seldom rises above 95 degrees.

Great and sudden changes of temperature and violent storms rarely occur.

The rainfall is evenly distributed throughout the year.

About six miles northeast of Collins there was a large drilling ground where the

men were trained for the Civil War.

Just before the Civil War there was a great barbecue between present Ora and Collins. There was much speaking concerning the war, which they were preparing for.

The first great gathering in the county after the war was on the other side of the Okatoma bridge. The speakers of the day were Williams and Hooker.

On January 5, 1922, Covington County will have been organized one hundred and three years.

COVINGTON COUNTY CHANGES SLOWLY

Since Miss Miller wrote her winning essay on Covington County in 1921 there have been many changes in the county, but not many changes in the qualities that area folk hold dear. Our school system has consolidated over 100 small, rural schools into six good educational institutions; we have more industries and therefore more jobs; and we have an excellent highway network.

Other traditions have changed little. Families still gather regularly to remember past generations; cars still stop for a funeral procession to pass; and our churches still hold fast to the ideals of God, country and family.

Each of Covington County's little communities has reason to be proud of its past and to look with pride and anticipation to the future.

RESOURCES

"Covington County," written by Doyle Keys; the personal memoirs of V. O. Campbell; "Covington County History," written by Mildred Miller; "Covington County, Mississippi," written by Ramon Napier; "Collins, Mississippi: Crossroads of South Mississippi," by Ronald Ellzey; *The Encyclopedia of Mississippi History*, written by Dunbar Rowland; "Covington County," written by an unknown WPA writer; Nelda Mitchell; Mark Fowler; Bill Dent; and Myrtle Massengale.



Jim Bivins, convicted murderer of George Walters, was hung from this gallows on April 3, 1903 at Williamsburg, by Sheriff John Mathison. According to the late Willie Campbell, the murder was over a fifty cent debt. Burns was buried at the poor house in Covington County.

(Photo courtesy of Lynn Mayfield, Chancery Clerk)

WILLIAMSBURG

Much like the Williamsburg of Virginia, the activity of the Williamsburg of Covington County was once centered around government because it served as the county seat for 79 years.

The local town may have been named for the colonial capital of the Thirteen Colonies. Some accounts have it named for Thomas H. Williams, one of the first U. S. Senators from Mississippi. The spelling of the name seems to have once been "Williamsburgh," possibly because of the large Scottish population in the area.

In its heyday, there were about 150 citizens in Williamsburg, but many more would come in for court days. The ladies of Williamsburg Baptist Church would serve lunches on these days to supplement the building fund for their church.

In addition to the courthouse, there was a post office (established in 1831), two hotels, eight or nine general stores, a school, a doctor (Dr. T. A. Gibson), several churches, a cotton gin, a tannery run by John Burkhalter, a gristmill, a telegraph office (1876), four newspapers, a Masonic Lodge, and street names.

WILLIAMSBURG POST OFFICE

The Williamsburg Post Office, one of the first in the county, was open from 1831-1907.

Miles B. Turner, Sept. 28, 1831 to April 12, 1833; Thos. H. Hopkins, Apr. 12, 1833 to July 8, 1834; Jno. McGaha, July 8, 1834 to Sept. 17, 1835; William Leggett, Sept. 17, 1835 to Jan. 5, 1837; M. C. Green, Jan. 5, 1837 to Jan. 26, 1837.



Melanie Rogers, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rogers, is shown with a replica of the second Williamsburg Courthouse made by her late grandfather, Melvin Mauldin. The courthouse is on display at Blackwell Memorial Library in Collins. (Photo by Gwen Keys Hitt)



This is the county's second courthouse, located at Williamsburg. The date of this photograph is uncertain, but it would have been before December 5, 1904 as the courthouse was burned about this date. The building, and its predecessor, were built by Neil Mathison. (Photo courtesy of the Blackwell Memorial Library, Collins.)

Aaron Pickering, Jan. 26, 1837 to Aug. 30, 1837; James L. Jolly, Aug. 30, 1837 to Aug. 27, 1838; William Leathers, Aug. 27, 1838 to Oct. 26, 1838; G. W. Hopkins, Oct. 26, 1838 to June 26, 1839; Jesse Burkhalter, June 26, 1839 to Dec. 14, 1839.

George D. Patterson, Dec. 14, 1839 to Sept. 4, 1840; Andrew J. Leggett, Sept. 4, 1840 to Mar. 1, 1842; John E. McNair, Mar. 1, 1842 to Nov. 2, 1842; Azel B. Bacon, Nov. 2, 1842 to June 18, 1843; Gilbert D. Gerig (?), June 18, 1843 to Feb. 13, 1844.

Joshua Burkhalter, Feb. 13, 1844 to June 12, 1844; Thos. P. Holloway, June 12, 1844 to Aug. 12, 1844; Joshua Burkhalter, Jr., Aug. 12, 1844 to Nov. 12, 1844; Thomas P. Holloway, Nov. 12, 1844 to Oct. 23, 1845; George F. Robertson, Oct. 23, 1845 to March 24, 1848.

Jno. L. Hargraves, Mar. 24, 1848 to June 4, 1849; Miles B. Turner, June 4, 1849 to Nov. 17, 1851; Thomas R. White, Nov. 17, 1851 to Apr. 8, 1854; James H. Vanzandt, Apr. 8, 1854 to Dec. 5, 1854; Thomas R. White, Dec. 5, 1854 to May 4, 1859.

George W. Turner, May 4, 1859 to Nov. 8, 1859; William B. Hartzog, Nov. 8, 1859 to Apr. 19, 1860; William J. Scott, Apr. 19, 1860 to Feb. 5, 1866; Arabella J. White, Feb. 5, 1866 to May 16, 1867; Kate J. Holloway, May 16, 1867 to Aug. 18, 1873.

Needham C. Blount, Aug. 18, 1873 to Apr. 22, 1875; George F. Robertson, Apr. 22, 1875 to Feb. 15, 1876; C. M. Edmunds, Feb. 15, 1876 to Mar. 9, 1876; Charles M. Edmonson, Mar. 9, 1876 to Sept. 2, 1891. An order dated Sept. 2, 1891 changed the spelling of the name of this office from Williamsburg to Williamsburgh.

Evans Hall, Sept. 2, 1891 to Mar. 15, 1892; Robert Sharborough, Mar. 15, 1892 to Nov. 7, 1893; Mrs. Irene Huntington, Nov. 7, 1893 to June 21, 1895; Jesse F. Robertson, June 21, 1895 to Apr. 8, 1903; Evans Hall, Apr. 8, 1903 to Dec. 21, 1906; Florence Grayson, Dec. 21, 1906 to June 15, 1907. This office was closed on June 15, 1907 with the mail going to Collins.

The plat of the town includes a public square where the courthouse was located and the names, and locations of the streets of Carrol, Main, Jackson, West, Pearl, Market, and Bond.

One of the most important buildings during the history of Williamsburg has been the Masonic Lodge. The Olive Branch Number 34 Lodge was organized in 1831 and its building has been used through the years, as a temporary courthouse when the courthouse burned, a school, and a meeting place for several church organizations. The building was erected in 1850 and was in almost the same location as the present Williamsburg Baptist sanctuary. The building was removed in 1971 when a new lodge was built near the former school building.

The Baptist church, organized in 1826, moved out of the lodge in about 1875. According to church member Mrs. Jewel Boyd, daughter of Williamsburg's doctor, Dr. T. A. Gibson, the church building was partially financed by the ladies' planning and furnishing ice cream suppers, which were a big part of the social life of the time.

Williamsburg Methodist Church was organized around 1830-40.

Mount Beulah Church was organized around 1900 and, according to Elijah Barnes, at one time also housed the Williamsburg Colored School.

All three of these church have cemeteries at their church location. The Methodist Cemetery is combined with the Catholic Cemetery. The oldest burial ground in the community appears to be the Williamsburg General Cemetery and the earliest grave marker is dated 1850. This information is taken from a book that lists the graves in Covington County Cemeteries, researched and compiled by Mrs. Idell Pride Pickering and Mrs. Lucille Rogers Skehan.

The General Cemetery lies between the lands of Jeff Magee and Joe Magee and, according to Don Dees, who has done some restoration work there, the ownership of the land is not known.

WILLIAMSBURG SCHOOL

The Williamsburg school was for many years a center of community activity. In 1934 the old two-story building was not sufficient for the number of students, and classes were held in the churches, the Methodist parsonage, and the lodge.

In 1934, while the two-story building was being renovated with some federal money it was burned, supposedly by an arsonist. According to V. O. Campbell, Sr., the rumor was that the idea of Williamsburg School having a large multi-purpose auditorium-gymnasium was "more than some school leaders could stand." Gov. Mike Sennett Conner, a Seminarian, helped get a bond issue passed in the state legislature for \$3,000 to rebuild the school.

The last graduating class at Williamsburg was in 1948. Mary Catherine Wright Smith of Collins, Travis Lynwood Campbell and Buck Graves were the three graduates that year.

The school continued for the lower grades until, in the words of V. O. Campbell, "the Super-Consolidated Dove swept the state around the late 1950s."

As a maker of news for many years, the town of Williamsburg was also the site of four news printers. According to a list of all newspapers in Mississippi before 1940 prepared by a WPA project, the first paper was the *Covington County Journal* and it was begun in 1889. In 1892, the editor was

an attorney, D. A. McIntosh. The paper continued until 1896.

The second paper, *The Watchman*, was established in 1891 by James Walker, and by 1900 was known as the *Watchman Journal*. It ceased publication in 1901.

The Republican Star was established in 1897 with J. R. Stewart as editor. According to Jerry Windsor's history of Seminary, this newspaper was the "official organ of the Republican Party." It ceased publication in 1901.

The Williamsburg Herald began in 1903 with J. T. Tannehill as editor and publisher. This short-lived paper was absorbed by the *Collins Commercial* in 1905.

Presently there are no newspapers in Williamsburg and the "downtown" section is a shadow of its previous self. The remains of the cavernous, graying gymnasium and teacherage are still there and they are both used for storage. The school cafeteria and main classroom building now house Mooney's Furniture. One general store, Williamsburg Grocery, established in 1928 as the S. W. Pierce Company, remains in business. It is owned by Herman Campbell and is operated by Dianne and Bobby McDonald.

WILLIAMSBURG TODAY

Williamsburg Baptist, Williamsburg Methodist and Mount Beulah churches continue their long history of worship and ministry in the community, but there is something "new." (When we are thinking in terms of 175 years of history then something thirty years old is "new.")

The Mississippi Headquarters of the Methodist Protestant Church and Campgrounds is located in the Williamsburg Community on Highway 84 West. According to Mrs. Isabell Jordan, she sold the 40 acre site to the church in 1951. Since that time they have built two dormitories, and one large "round" building which is used for a dining hall downstairs and an auditorium upstairs. Groups meet there—usually three times during the summer. One summer, guests came from 48 states.



The Olive Branch No. 34 Masonic Lodge building at Williamsburg once served as temporary courthouse, school house, and house of worship. The building was removed in the early 1970s after having stood on the same spot since 1850. (Photo courtesy V. O. Campbell, Sr.)

Williamsburg, the county seat, the site of bustling activity is no more. What does remain is a closely knit community. The old home sites now sit side by side with modern brick structures. Living there are many families whose ancestors were a part of that early time and as they live, so does the spirit of almost 160 years of this, the nurturing place of Covington County government.

RESOURCES

Some of this information for this chapter was obtained from V. O. Campbell, Sr.; Miss Beatrice Campbell, and from the history of Williamsburg Baptist Church, written by the Rev. Gale Anderson.

COLLINS

Collins, the present county seat of Covington County, was a stretch of timber as late as 1899. With the coming of the railroad, a town was quickly organized. In order to build the needed businesses and homes much of the timber was given away and even burned to make room for the dwellings and stores.

In 1949, when the settlement was 50 years old, Collins was featured in an article in the *Jackson Daily News*, May 1, 1949. The story, written by Jack Hancock gives a good history of the city.

"Collins, Mississippi, is a town with a personality. Of course every group of people which makes up a town or city has a personality of its own, just as have the individuals—but some have a great deal more charm and warmth. And Collins has a community personality that strikes you as soon as you begin getting acquainted with the place.

Collins—once known as Williamsburg Depot—is a comparatively new town, as Mississippi cities go: it didn't get under way until about 1906; since that time it

almost gave up the ghost twice—once when a tornado slapped it down and a little later when the sawmills which whirled the town into being "cut out" and left, dropping the population from a high of over 6,000 to around 700.

Both times Collins accepted the challenge and made a comeback from what ought to have been a knockout punch—and after visiting with its friendly people a while you can understand why.

As of right now, Collins has a population of between 1,500 and 2,000 people.

Collins is the only city in the state with city home exemption.

Of its six miles of streets, only slight over a mile is unpaved.

When post-war growth began to be a problem for its sewer lines, Collins agreed that until it can expand the sewer system, it will build septic tanks for all homes not served.

Although there isn't an oil or gas well in the county, oil production is high in its economy because the Plantation Pipe Line runs right through the town, the company has a giant and valuable pumping station just outside the city and Gulf and Standard oil companies have immense plants which pull gasoline from the pipe line to serve central Mississippi.

There isn't a big sawmill, as such, now in the town that was founded on timber—but a pre-fabricated house factory turns out two houses a day and ships them to the middle west.

Collins also has a sweet potato-drying plant that is kept active by its back-country; a sub-station for the big pickle factory at Wiggins; a new ice plant going up and runs its own electric power station.

But Collins is not an industrial town, and it's economy is now based on trade with the rich farm country which is back of it. Along the wide, paved main street are a flock of general stores, groceries, clothing shops, farm machinery and auto dealers while on the side streets are more of the same. Just about what you'd expect to find in a town that is "neighbors" to all the farmers in the area and likes to boast that it keeps its stores stocked with the latest type merchandise.

That, too, is part of its personality.

It likes to be known as a leader among cities and to have citizens who are leaders in their vocations.

Where, for instance, but in Collins would you find an editor like Jimmy Arrington? And where else could he get away with some of the things he does in the weekly *News Commercial*?

Like the time he wanted to run a picture of some man on the front page: he had a cut made of a full length picture, instead of just the head. The engraver's cut, when it arrived, was one column wide and about 12 inches deep, which didn't fit in with Jimmy's plans for the front page that week. He didn't have time to order a new cut.

Did he leave it out of the paper for lack of room?

Not J. D. He sawed the cut in the middle, just about the man's waist, and, running the top half at the bottom of page one, he put a line of type underneath it—"this picture continued on page three." Sure enough at the top of page three, there was rest of the man's picture.

Most of you have read of his recent April 1 issue, if you haven't seen it: a "scarehead" in big type said "Truman Resigns," the rest of the front page was filled with equally impossible stories—and every one carried a line at the end "Continued on Back Page." Across the top half of the back page, in his biggest block type, were the two words, "April Fool."

Each week his column on the left hand column of the front page carries comments on local eccentricities: but he writes a short "daily column" of comment that several papers use — "and pay good money for, I don't know why" he adds.

Currently, in addition to serving as mayor of the town (he's held the job 14 years) Jimmy Arrington edits his paper and is president of the Mississippi Press Association, is known from New England to Texas and from Florida to Oregon for his homespun after-dinner type speeches and is forever flying somewhere to talk.

TOWN THAT WASN'T THERE

Seems that as a forerunner of the establishment of Collins, away back in 1826, the legislature authorized a commission to select a "permanent seat of justice" for Covington County.

The commission, composed of John McGuffee, George Kirkwood Duncan Thompson, Howard Kees and William

Smith—all names still familiar in the county—met on the first Monday in May to lay out the town at the home of John Harvey, whose house was named in the act as the site of the first court.

"Williamsburgh" was also ordered by the Legislature as the name of the town; honoring Thomas H. Williams who had been registrar of the U. S. Land office from Mississippi and was one of the two first U. S. senators named from the state. Somewhere between the legislature and Covington county the "h" came off the name and the town was always known as Williamsburg.

In spite of its early establishment, Williamsburg didn't get around to being incorporated until 1888 when the legislature named a commission composed of Jessie F. Robertson, H. C. Yawn and C. M. Edmonson to hold an election for a mayor, marshal and three select-men.

Williamsburg by this time was quite a town, with several sawmills making in-roads on the "Piney woods" area.

Then along came the railroad. In 1899 the Gulf and Ship Island railroad—now a part of the Illinois Central system—was laid out and missed Williamsburg by a good two miles

Anxious to take advantage of this new transportation facility, the mills one by one



The Gulf and Ship Island Railroad Depot was the beginning of the town of Collins, first called Williamsburg Depot at its beginning in 1899. Jobs were plentiful, the timber was plentiful and the times were good. Here, railroad employees pose with a hand car. The man at right is W. J. Brunt. (Photo courtesy of Blackwell Memorial Library, Collins)

moved over the two mile stretch to the nearest point on the GS and I, the site of what is now Collins.

Since it meant practically moving the town over, the new suburb was named "Williamsburg Depot," and it began to thrive at once.

A petition for incorporation of the town of Williamsburg Depot was filed with Governor Longino in June, 1900, setting out proposed boundaries and the fact that there were more than 200 inhabitants. However, out of the 200, the petition admitted that there were only eleven qualified electors, since the town was so new the others hadn't been residents long enough to qualify. Among the petition's signers were C. T. Rawls, T. C. Blount, C. E. Williamson, W. M. Blount, Dan Williamson, Eugene Robertson, W. A. Mathison, J. H. Wolfe, John Huddleston and Dave Nalls.

Apparently everything went smoothly until March 6, 1905, when the place began bursting out at the seams: the leaders petitioned then Governor James K. Vardaman to change Williamsburg Depot from a town to a city, inasmuch as the population had now reached 2,015.

Meantime, the post office got tangled up in the name changing.

Seems they had to do a lot of hand-cancellation in those days and writing Williamsburg Depot" every time they cancelled a stamp, soon gave some of the postal clerks writers' cramp.

After going over the list of available names the post office department came through with its suggestion.

"Bad."

Nobody in the town agreed with that suggestion. While the new name was as short as the old one was long, they didn't like the inference.

After a lot of squabbling, everybody agreed on "Collins," for Fred W. Collins of Meridian, who was a Republican leader in the state about then and stood in well with the post office department.

So far as any records show, Fred Collins never even paid an official visit to the thriving little city that was named for him, and as the years went by, people forgot what Collins the place was named for.

Which brings on another good story; during a hot campaign a few years ago. Editor Arrington was backing Congressman Wall Doxey for U. S. Senator against Congressman Ross Collins. In a typical Arrington headline he announced:

"Collins to vote for Doxey."

In an impish mood, he then went on to give the results of his own survey which he said showed that Doxey would easily carry the town of Collins.

Equally impish, Ross Collins retorted in a campaign speech that "I know the city of Collins will go for me, because it was named for me."



In this old photo, an oxen team pulls a load up the Main Street of Collins. The background buildings are on the lower end of the north side of the street, near the railroad. (Photo courtesy of the Blackwell Memorial Library, Collins.)

That one always stopped J. D. He said he was sure the place was not named for Ross but he couldn't find anybody who knew who or what was honored by the naming. Fame not only was fleeting but in this case it ran off and hid.

Just in time to save himself embarrassment, Mayor Arrington dug up some old state archives that mentioned Fred Collins, the Republican leader.

Next week he reported that "maybe Ross was right; about all I could find out was that the town was named after some Republican named Collins."

But to wind up that town naming officially; on October 25, 1906 a petition was filed with the governor asking that the name of the town be changed to Collins; signing the petition were Mayor S. H. Hemphill, Clerk M. W. Mounger, and Aldermen W. L. Williamson, A. Mr. Holloway, and C. H. Ramsey. All those are still familiar family names too around Covington county and points away from there; most of you know a son of the city clerk. Bill Mounger, now president of the Deposit Guaranty Bank in Jackson. The name of the town was officially changed to "Collins" Nov. 27, 1906, and everybody hopes it will stick.

If you're interested in some other old names that are still familiar, Mayor Arrington dug up the official roster for 1902; Mayor J. F. Williamson; Marshall W. L. Magee; Aldermen C. E. Williamson, L. D. Terrell, J. D. Kervin, W. N. Blount, W. L. Williamson and W. B. Holloway.

The same year that Collins was officially adopted for a name, the town became the county seat — which makes another interesting sidelight.

Collins felt that it had an inherent right to be the county seat, since it had replaced Williamsburg, the original site which was now about extinct.

But Seminary, Mount Olive and Ora, all of which had also sprung up along the new railroad, all got in the race. Seminary was so sure it could win an election for the site that it got a bill introduced in legislature to allow it to build a court house for the county. The other towns apparently all ganged up on Seminary for that. The matter got hot in the Senate, and a little fellow named Theo G. Bilbo won the everlasting thanks of Seminary by casting the deciding vote for the Seminary bill. Folks down that way say that's why he always got a good vote in Seminary even when he was opposed later by one of the town's native sons, Mike Conner.

At any rate the bill got through both houses, only to be vetoed by the governor — after lengthy hearings at which both sides brought up the best legal authority in the state.

In the ensuing election, Collins — which is in just about the geographical center of the county — won easily and work was started at once on the court house. First court was held in the building in January, 1908. The building, which cost \$60,000, still stands and has required little repairing through the years. It houses about all of the regular county offices, although the health and welfare departments are in the lower floor of the Collins City Hall.

From all data available, Collins rocked along right well in the ensuing decade. Timber was plentiful, the sawmills were busy and nobody worried about getting a job. As the woods were cut, more farms

came into being and a rich back country was developed.

By about 1917, Collins boasted a population of around 6,000 to 7,000 people — and that was when Jackson only had 20,000.

Around then, the timber became scarce, and as the woods were “cut out” the mills moved away—there were six big mills active at one time. Of course they didn’t all go at once, and those that stayed cut their payrolls before they finally gave up, but the town dwindled until in the late twenties there were but 700 citizens left.

There was nothing but retail business to keep the place alive, and a lot of the back country was pretty well worn out. Other towns along the gravel road that went through from Hattiesburg to Jackson, were all in about the same fix and retail competition was rough.

That would have been the time for Collins to throw in the sponge and decide on a future as a worn-out mill town; if Collins had been that kind of a town.

Which it wasn’t.

It began developing its personality and reaching out after business. Several farm projects were spearheaded by the city folks just to show their interest in the rural neighbors. Although none of them worked out too well, the town tried several small industries, which lasted quick.

At about the ebb of things — along toward the tall end of the depression — a shot in the arm for the whole county came

with interest in oil. That was before the first oil well in the state was struck at Yazoo county and quite sometime before any of the many South Mississippi oil fields blossomed into being. But the geologists intrigued by the series of ridges that run across the county’s northern end, were sure there was oil in those hills. Much of the land in the county was leased — and at even a dollar an acre rental, the money meant something.

So far nobody has made a “strike” in Covington county, but the geologists and some of the landowners are still just as sure that there is oil down there if only they can find out where. There has been a renewed “play” in leases in the area in the last year or so; and as fast as any old leases run out, most of them are renewed or taken up by some other outfit.

Meantime, though, the state’s paved highway program got under way in 1936, and since there was already a part of that section paved, Highway 49 from Jackson to Hattiesburg and on to the coast was completed as one of the first projects. While it also helped some of its competitors, the new concrete highway gave Collins a new lease on life.

Later Highway 84, east and west, was paved from Laurel on the east to Prentiss and across to Natchez on the west, and ran right through Collins, giving it a fine junction. Comparatively recently, Highway 35 was finished, from Kosciusko to the north-east to Smith county and into Collins, tapping new trade areas for the town.

Probably the increase in traffic on these

paved roads sold the citizens of Collins on its need for paving; some paving had been done in the WPA days and of course the highways ran through town, but now Collins boasts that not only does it have a high ratio of paved streets, but it only has one road leading into town that is not paved.

“We’re going to get it paved soon,” Mayor Arrington vows; it’s only a county road, but it spoils Collins’ boast about paving. In addition to the through highways, a farm-to-market paved road branches off just outside town—the road to the famous neighbor village of Hot Coffee.

TOWN BALL TEAM IS NEGRO

Probably no place else in Mississippi could baseball be in the same condition as at Collins. Sports minded local citizens are rabid sports fans, and a lot of good talent for baseball, basketball and football has come from the area. The city has a municipal field where the high school team plays football and other sports, and Mayor Jimmy says the present rickety looking wooden bleachers are going to be replaced with a small concrete stadium. That’s held up now pending completion of the municipal veterans building, which will make the old Legion clubhouse on the ball park site available for sports equipment.

When school quits, there is annually a campaign to get a good amateur or semi-pro baseball team going, and several times the town has tried one but never has been able to get a real winner.

Meantime, a fast colored baseball team known as the “Collins Red Sox” have made a name for themselves, so this year the town’s sportsmen “adopted” them. Business men put up money for uniforms and equipment for the Negro team, which will be Collins’ official team.

That new community building, by the way, is almost completed; it will house all local service organizations, including the veterans’ post. It also will have quarters for local clubs which will schedule regular meetings there. A barbecue pit in the back yard will serve several hundred. A big opening ceremony is planned as soon as the building is finally complete.

Just skipping around town a bit; there’s a nice new ice plant nearing completion—“Keep cool with Collins”—and I believe I mentioned the sweet potato drying and curing plant established by a farmers’ co-op. It ties in with a countywide campaign for more and better sweet potatoes which is working well. Several hundred acres are also signed up for cucumbers which are “salted down” in brine vats at the pickle station near the depot; from there are taken as needed to the pickle factory at Wiggins.



The Collins High School was only five years old when this class photo was taken of the fourth and fifth grades in 1905. This building was at the same location as the present Collins Elementary School. (Photo courtesy of Lucille Rogers Skehan.)



This composite photo of the Collins High School Class of 1950 shows that the class officers that year were Bobby Magee, president; Wallace Allred, vice president; and John Samuel Welch secretary-treasurer. Two years before, in 1948, the Collins Pride Band had been organized with 56 members with Dewey Camp of Jackson, band director. (Photo courtesy of Lucille Rogers Skehan.)

Incidentally, that potato dehydrating plant is a \$40,000 project, for which money was raised locally to match a state grant. The big building is heated electrically for curing.

While mentioning these industrial projects, better tell you too that the city has two gins inside the city limits and one nearby, which annually handle about 5,500 bales; they ran 6,000 last year.

That pre-fab house project is one of the town's prides—and Mayor Arrington is especially proud that “they just located here, without any requests for a subsidy of any kind from the town.”

Fred Thyer, president of the Thyer Lumber company of Toledo, Ohio, just decided Collins was well located for a plant to build the big part of pre-fabricated houses, so he set up a plant and moved in. Makes a good market for local lumber and employment for a crew of skilled carpenters.

Broadus B. Atwood, the superintendent, explained that the walls, roof and floors of the houses are fabricated here, all ready to put together; the finishing work, including windows and doors, are made in Toledo and shipped to the assembling point.

Currently, the plant is in the middle of an order for over 200 houses for an Indianapolis project—all exactly alike. The plant finishes two houses a day, packs the sections of the two houses in one freight car and send it on to Indianapolis, where the

buyers have a construction crew waiting to put the parts together and add on the Toledo made finish. The current job is a 24 by 28 foot, four room house. When the first one was sent to Indianapolis, the Thyers said a big opening was held and the company which backed the housing project got 40 orders the first week. P. T. Terrell, auditor for the plant, said Mr. Atwood plans to step up production beyond two houses a day because of demands.

From the pre-fab plant, let's go by the city hall for a minute and see how the city is run.

All members of the city board except Mayor Arrington are veterans of World War II and the city clerk, Mrs. D. L. O. Speed, is a veteran's widow. On the board are Charles Duckworth, Herman Thames, Broadus Atwood, Fridge Cameron, W. B. Canfield and the mayor.

HOMES TAX EXEMPT

Collins boasts that it is the only city in the state with full homestead exemption.

As you know, the state homestead exemption law only takes care of state and county levies, plus school district taxes—in each case excepting bonds which can't be exempt under the Constitution.

When the legislature failed to exempt city taxes, Mayor Jimmy and the council and their lawyers got together and announced they were going to work out a city homestead exemption law. Some of the

lawyers still say it can't be done — but they're doing it. The mayor explained that under their ordinance, they just copy the county roll of tax-exempt homes, follow the same rules established by the tax commission for determining what homes should be exempt “and then we exempt 'em.”

Mayor Arrington admits that the ordinance may be illegal—he spent awhile studying law to — but he queries “who's going to take it to court?” And answers himself by saying nobody has, til yet.

Taxes are very light — the city collects no privilege taxes from merchants as it is allowed to do by law — and in spite of the exemption, rates on remaining property are low.

Collins owns its municipal electric and water plants, which turn in a nice chunk of money to help run the city, but Mayor Arrington explains that the electric rates are “competitive.” He said they are based on rates of the Mississippi Power company and REA lines, both of which have lines in the city and serve certain customers. The municipal plant don't mind them being in town. Jimmy says, because the city plant has all it can handle now, operating to capacity.

A flat rate of \$1.65 per month is charged home owners for water; together with the light plant, these municipal operations bring \$30,000 a year revenue, of which about \$1,000 a month is net profit. Water comes from a deep well and the city has underground storage, but not of sufficient capacity and the mayor says one of the new city projects is an overhead storage tank or tower.

Incidentally, the mayor says water mains run to all points in the present city limits.

Collins has a sewerage system too, but isn't too pleased with its future; sewerage is dumped in the beautiful Okatoma river, which grates on the mayor's poetic nerves. Besides he says he knows the health department is going to fuss before long.

A committee from the council and city clubs are studying a long-range sewerage plan, since there's no immediate need of change.

Fire hydrants are spotted well around town and a volunteer fire department looks after blazes in the main part of town. The sewer system handles water from the firemen's hose.

When, like all other towns, Collins began spreading out into new subdivisions after the war, the city already had water mains available, but was worried about its sewer system capacity.

Don't tell the Jackson city officials about this, because it might complicate things here; but Collins licked that problem too.

The town installs—at city cost—septic tanks for all new houses in the city limits that can't be reached by present sewer mains. A separate tank for each home.

While we were busy listing this dope in Editor Arrington's office, there was a cloud of dust whooping by outside and a clanking of machinery—and Jimmy beamed a broad grin.

"Our new street sweeper," he explained, "just delivered yesterday; I figured you'd be here about now so I told them to run it by so you could see it, but I didn't think it would stir up so much dust."

OIL DISTRIBUTION POINT

I mentioned back there some place that the county has no oil or gas fields, but that because of pipelines, the industry means much to the county and to Collins, which is a hub for activities.

Without going into too much detail, the Plantation Pipe Line corporation's big line from Baton Rouge to the east coast goes right through town; way out in the woods there's a pumping station that controls the flow of gasoline and other products.

Bob Hills, the superintendent and Bill Williams, his assistant, took us all through the place—a maze of fancy machinery with millions of valves of all sizes. I won't even try to describe that operation, for it's mighty complicated; but Mr. Williams showed us the April schedule of the line—it's made up a month ahead. They will pump 2,810,020 barrels of assorted oil this month, 93,667 barrels a day—gasoline, kerosene, diesel fuel, tractor fuels, household oil and high octane airplane gasoline.

The way the line puts on "order" after another through the lines, with liquid "plugs" in between, is a story in itself. And the way the meters keep everything constantly under control, and determine what is running through each minute. A teletype system all along the line allows each plant like this along the line to keep in constant touch with all others and with head quarters; at Baton Rouge, where the big refineries are located.

In addition to its pumping station, the Plantation has a "take-off" station just outside Collins, which controls the flow from the big line to the Standard and Gulf stations which you can see along the highway south of Collins.

In fact the Standard Oil company's plant is in the city limits; Mayor Jimmy said he told Gulf when they placed theirs a little further south, outside the city limits, it wouldn't do them any good. Says the city is going to reach out and get them inside the corp. limits soon!

The Standard plant—outside its pumping sheds—is mostly big tanks for storage; they hold an estimated 30,000 barrels (there



This large frame house, owned by W. J. Brunt, was one of the first built in the City of Collins around the turn of the century. It was located behind the present News Commercial Printing Co. The paper that was printed there at that time was owned by Robert Watkins with Ray Logan as printer. Vera Brunt (Thurman) and her sister Eva (on the right) remember that "we grew up in the printing office." The girl's father, W. J. Brunt had bought the house from Jim Kervin when Mr. Kervin moved to Columbia, Mississippi. Mr. Brunt was in the grocery business in Collins. (Photo courtesy of Vera Brunt Thurman.)

are 42 gallons to a barrel) and from these the company serves, by truck and rail, the retail outlets west to Brookhaven, south to Poplarville, east to Laurel and north to Mendenhall. They explained that a big Standard "take-off" plant at Vicksburg handles Jackson and other points north and west.

The Gulf plant is even larger—it has 75,000 barrel capacity, and more facilities for railroad shipping. It serves the area around, bounded by Wiggins, Laurel and Yazoo City—considerably more than that served by the Standard plant.

All tanks and buildings of both companies are well kept up, freshly painted—and well fenced.

In case you think the "big line" is the only one around, Mayor Arrington reminds you that the United Gas company's line from Gwinville field runs through the city, as does the Wilmut Gas company's line, and the new Continental Pipe Line company's oil pipeline east—now under construction—will be nearby.

STILL HOPE TO STRIKE OIL

—And Collins and the county hasn't yet given up hopes for its own oil and gas fields; at one time about 75 per cent of the county was under lease, according to estimates of President Ellis McInnis of the bank, who took time out, incidentally, to escort us to the Plantation line's plant site and show us some of the Collins sights. He thinks about 50 to 60 per cent of the acreage in the Collins area is still leased, but activity is slow at present.

Seismograph crews representing several major oil companies are presently working out of Collins on a "two year project," the mayor said, during which these experts hope to develop a pretty good picture of what's underneath the area.

Several trailer camps are occupied by seismograph crews and their families and some of the crew members—expecting to be here a long time—have rented parts of large lawns belonging to local residents. They just jack up their trailer, plant a small garden and give their families something resembling a home life. Make good neighbors too, the mayor adds.

SCHOOL BAND IS PRIDE

Collins High school is the pride and joy of all residents there, and currently the school band is the talk of the town.

Somehow the town never got around to organizing a band until last fall, but is making up for lost time now. It has been running five months, has 56 members and Dewey Camp of Jackson, who directs it and some other school bands, declares it has fine prospects.

Superintendent G. H. Russell of the schools said enrollment in elementary and high schools tops 500 with average attendance at 450.

The big school building, (the present Collins Elementary School) which has a spacious campus, looks like two buildings, joined by a third; the northeast side of the building houses the junior and senior high school grades; the lower six are in the other end. Between is a large auditorium, with a boiler room off to one side.

A ground floor under the grammar school furnishes room for the cafeteria. A separate frame building (the main school is of brick) houses the vocational, agricultural and home economics division, and another separate building provides a swell gym. This is used for band practice as well; but has a roomy basketball court and seats for about 600 on the sides.

Collins' school got a break when the late Col. C. W. Wood, head of the Wood Lumber company and noted philanthropist, gave the school some 4,000 acres of land, just to give education a break. The school district still owns some 2,000 acres and has sold stumpage from some of it; a little of the rest is leased for farming.

HOSPITAL DUE SOON

Although the town has several widely acclaimed doctors, it has no hospital—but plans to build a 25-room \$225,000 plant as part of the state hospital commission's program, as a joint city and county deal. The city has donated the site and the bond issue has been voted—in fact the money is in the bank awaiting approval of federal and state grants.

Part of the delay was due to choice of a site, Mayor Arrington said; first the city offered the ball park, but they didn't know where they'd get another recreation site so good. State and federal experts objected to the site because (1) it was low and (2) a little noisy—too near the railroad.

The new site—a block wide two blocks long—is (1) on top of a hill and (2) next to the cemetery, meeting both objections.

Incidentally, that cemetery, one of the prettiest in the state, is owned by the city and kept up like a city park.

I don't know why this note happens to pop in right here, but this is as good time as any to mention that part of a city beautification plan is being carried out there in an unusual way. Space between the paved streets and the sidewalks are not guttered, in most of the residential areas, so the householders — at the instigation of the garden clubs — are volunteering to sod the space between the paving and the sidewalks.

The two garden clubs are mighty active — of course we were there at the height of the spring blooming season, when every yard was colorful with spring blooms; and Mayor Jimmy said the garden clubs keep the lawns that way almost all year around.

In addition to the gardeners, the town boasts an active Rotary club, a Junior Chamber of Commerce, a Music club and two veterans organizations, an American Legion and a V.F.W. post, all of which will have a place for meetings in the new Municipal building.

Well, that about takes care of Collins' past and present; though we might mention that the little city has furnished mayors for Jackson, Mendenhall, Magee and Collins, all serving at one time, and that the county produced mayors of both Hattiesburg and Mobile.

Collins boasts louder of its present than it does of its past and is more interested in it; as for the future, any town with the Collins spirit doesn't have to worry about the next span of years.

It meets problems as they come up, stays ahead of most other towns of its size and when things get tough — just turns on that old personality."

POST OFFICE

After first being called "Williamsburg Depot" and even tentatively called "Bad,"

the post office was officially given the name "Collins" in 1906 when the name of the town was finally recognized.

The following have served as postmasters through the years: Eugene E. Robertson, Dec. 11, 1899 to Aug. 1, 1913; Benjamin F. Lott, Aug. 1, 1913 to Nov. 1, 1918; Wm. R. Flanagan, Nov. 1, 1918 to Sept. 1, 1924; Bettie D. Robertson, Sept. 1, 1924 to Aug. 14, 1933; Mrs. Grace B. McIntosh, Aug. 17, 1933 to Oct. 9, 1942; Miss Tommie G. Danley, Oct. 31, 1946 to Nov. 1, 1948; Vivian O. Campbell, Nov. 1, 1948 to Feb. 28, 1950; John M. Allred, Feb. 28, 1950 to Sept. 17, 1951; Miss Tommie G. Danley, Sept. 17, 1951 to Nov. 30, 1955. (The records were changed on Aug. 21, 1953 to read, "changed by marriage from Tommie G. Danley to Mrs. Grace D. Nall.") Wiley L. Williamson, Nov. 30, 1955 to March 15, 1985; Melvin R. Banks, July 6, 1985 to present.

COLLINS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The following information was taken from a history of the church written by Dorothy Arrington Smith in 1977.

The Methodist Church in Collins, Mississippi was organized on February 1, 1900, by the Reverend J. S. Raynor, who at the time resided in Magee, Mississippi. The first meeting place was a vacant grocery store building which stood on the spot near where *The News — Commercial Printing Plant* is located. Mr. G. J. Pope was the first person received into the membership of the church.

Other charter members were: Mrs. G. J. Pope (then Miss Blount), Miss Amelia Blount, Dr. W. N. Blount, Mr. Sam Coulter and a Mr. Higgins. A few more people were present when the church was organized, but the above mentioned constitute the charter membership. Those who worshipped at evening services were asked to bring lanterns and lamps along to light the building.

At a quarterly conference held in Magee in the fall of 1900, the Collins congregation was authorized to erect a church building. Lots 1 and 2, Block 23 in the Town of Williamsburg Depot (later changed to Collins) were sold by W. R. Holloway, Trustee, to the Trustees of Williamsburg Depot Methodist Episcopal Church South.

The following summer the small membership went to work to raise funds for the building program. In 1901, the first church building was erected while Rev. J. S. Raynor was pastor.

In February 1904, under the leadership of Rev. Gus Hermon, work was begun on a parsonage on the lot adjoining the church. Rev. Harmon and his family moved into the parsonage in 1905.

In 1924 a cyclone destroyed the first church. Immediately, Rev. J. W. Thomp-

son led the people in the erection of a new building. This building was used until the present church was begun on August 7, 1950. Rev. O. S. Lewis, in his 50th year in the ministry, enthusiastically led the people in this program. The first worship service in the new church was on March 18, 1951.

The Church was dedicated May 17, 1953.

In 1953, the parsonage which was erected in 1904, was torn down and rebuilt. The building committee was able to secure much material and furnishings at cost. Some members donated labor.

With a growing membership, a need for more Sunday School rooms was seen soon after the church was built. On April 16, 1967 the Educational building was put into use.

The pastors of the church and their pastorates are as follows; J. S. Raynor, 1900-2; G. S. Harmon, 1902-7; B. F. Jones, 1907-9; H. L. Norton, 1909-11; J. C. Chambers, 1911-14; J. Y. Bowman, 1914; W. M. Williams, 1915-19; J. M. Lewis, 1919-22; J. W. Thompson, 1922-26; P. H. Grice, 1926-29; J. M. Corley, 1929-31; H. L. Norton, 1931; T. C. Cooper, 1932-35;

John M. Moore, 1935; J. D. Slay, 1936; J. S. Noblin, 1937-41; T. R. Holt, 1941-44; A. W. Wilson, 1944-50; O. S. Lewis, 1950-55; J. H. Cameron, 1955-61; Lamar Martin, 1961-63; Eugie Price 1963-64; Charles Laseter, 1964-68; Robert Huffman, 1968-73; James Harrison, 1973-75; James Williams, 1975-76; J. H. Cameron, 1976-79; Keith Hagenson 1979-84; and Larry Creel 1984.

The church has sent two missionaries into foreign fields and one young man into the ministry, viz: Mrs. Lillian Williams Beanland, Mrs. Hubert Degosserie and Rev. Philip Grice. Mrs. Beanland went from the church as a missionary to Africa in 1918; and Mrs. Degosserie as a missionary to Africa in 1928.

COLLINS BAPTIST CHURCH

The following history of the Collins Baptist Church was written for the church's 75th anniversary in 1975. The information was obtained from the church's minutes and was compiled by an historical committee.

In the newly built town of Collins, Mississippi, twelve young Christians came together in the year 1900 with the purpose of organizing a Baptist church. The Collins First Baptist Church, as it was named, was organized May 20, 1900, with the following charter members: W. J. Carter, Sallie Carter, J. F. Williamson, C. E. Williamson, W. L. Williamson, Mollie Williamson, Mary Nall, E. E. Robertson, Bettie Robertson, A. Q. Higgins, A. T. Abercrombie and Hester Abercrombie. Brother J. L. Finley was chosen as pastor for the year 1900. Brothers J. F. Williamson and

W. J. Carter were selected as deacons and Brother W. L. Williamson as church clerk.

The first meeting was held in a planning mill shed of Williamsburg Lumber Company, and subsequent meetings were held in a small store building situated on the spot now occupied by our local printing plant. This little building became the first church house. Here, under the leadership of the pastor, J. L. Finley, the group planned for the erection of a larger and more modern building on the site of our present church.

In 1902 the members, by then thirty-five in number, were faced with the problems of calling a new pastor and completing the new church building. Reverend T. D. Bush was chosen as pastor and by April 4, 1902, the building was nearing completion. The first revival, led by Reverend J. P. Williams as evangelist, was held during the third week of October.

During this time the women of the church began systematic mission work which eventually resulted in the organization of the Woman's Missionary Society. Also, the first church organist was elected and lighting for the church was provided.

With the resignation of Reverend T. D. Bush, the church called Reverend J. T. Dale as pastor for the year 1905 at a salary of \$450.00. During this year Sunday School rooms and a baptistry were added. During Reverend Dale's ministry prayer meeting became a part of church schedule and services were held each Sunday.

In October, 1911, following the resignation of Reverend Dale, Reverend J. P. Williams was called as pastor. The salary at this time was \$1,200.00, which was reduced to \$900.00 with three-fourth time services in 1912. Because of finances the church voted in 1914 to reduce preaching services to two Sunday morning services and three Sunday night services at a salary of \$750.00.

Reverend S. G. Posey succeeded Reverend Williams as pastor in 1919 and served for one year. Lots in front of the present church were purchased for the pastor's home. Upon Posey's resignation the church called Dr. John T. Christian, Professor of Bible History at the Baptist Bible Institute at New Orleans, as supply pastor. He was so greatly beloved by the congregation that the call became permanent and he served until his death in 1925. During his tenure the church was destroyed by the 1924 tornado and a new building was erected. Services again became full time. Reverend L. W. Ferrell filled the pulpit while Dr. Christian was on a trip to the Holy Land.

Reverend James B. Parker followed Dr. Christian as pastor. All of the organizations expanded during his ministry and the church became debt free in 1926.

With the resignation of Reverend

Parker, the Church called Reverend W. B. Abel, who began his service on October 1, 1927, at a salary of \$2,400.00. In 1928, the old pastor's home was sold and the house adjacent to the church property was purchased. This is the site of the present parsonage. During the depression years the church went to half time and the pastor's salary was reduced to \$1,200.00.

In May, 1931, Reverend Abel resigned and was succeeded by Reverend J. W. Gray of Clinton, Mississippi, who served until May of 1936; whereupon, Reverend R. Houston Smith, then a student at the Baptist Bible Institute, served as pastor on a part time basis until Reverend W. L. Day was called as pastor. Full time worship was resumed and the organizations grew under his leadership. He resigned on March 18, 1939.

The church continued to grow under the capable leadership of Reverend Mack Jones who served as pastor from 1940 to 1947, and following his departure Reverend James Fairchild assumed charge as pastor in July, 1947, at a salary of \$3,600.00.

Reverend W. B. Abel was called to serve again as pastor effective August 1, 1949. The building and remodeling program was underway in the early fifties and during his time the corporate title of the church was changed to Collins Baptist Church. Membership was now 416 with 320 enrolled in Sunday School and 153 in Training Union. This grew in 1952 to a total of 437 with contributions of \$25,172.25. The new pastor's home was built with an indebtedness of \$15,000.00.

Upon the resignation of Reverend Abel, the church called Reverend A. B. Pierce. During his years the church voted to have twelve active deacons and the order was passed to purchase the property behind the present church for use as an educational building but which later served as a home for the minister of music. In May of 1956, a service was held to celebrate the 56th anniversary of the church and to celebrate the fact that the church was debt free.

Reverend Charles Evans became pastor in 1957. Dial-A-Prayer was purchased in 1958, and the 40 acres of land which had been willed to the church by Bettie D. Robertson, former charter member was deeded to the Town of Collins for use as a public park.

Succeeding Reverend Evans was Reverend Clyde B. Little who served from 1962 until 1964. The church continued to grow under his leadership and his dedication to the Lord and to the people he served was felt by all.

Reverend Joe Ratcliff was called in 1964. During his years of faithful service, the church has seen marked growth in membership which reached 600 in 1973. The church has adopted the new group grading system

as recommended by the Southern Baptist Convention, initiated a bus ministry, and inaugurated the Wednesday family night program. Much improvement has been made on the church building in that the sanctuary and educational department has been completely remodeled and redecorated, a portico has been added, an elevator installed, and a new organ and grand piano have been purchased.

The most recent addition to the church is the educational wing, built in 1985. The addition features a stained glass window given in memory of two young girls who were killed in the 1924 tornado that destroyed much of Collins.

COLLINS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The following history of the Collins Presbyterian Church was written by Nanny C. Coulter and printed in *The News Commercial* on Friday, December 1, 1950. It was brought up to date by the present clerk of the session, Bob Acord.

The Town of Collins Mississippi was founded in the year 1899. All the leading denominations were given two lots each, one for a church and one for a pastor's home. The Presbyterians were the first to build a house of worship. The church was organized by Rev. W. D. Spurlin on the 4th Sabbath in November, 1900, in exercise of evangelistic powers, with the following thirteen charter members:

T. C. Blount and wife
W. R. Holloway and wife
D. C. Buchanan and wife
Dr. C. H. Ramsay and wife
T. D. McRae
W. A. Mathison
W. C. Brown
Mrs. Florence McRaney
Mrs. Nannie C. Coulter

Dr. C. H. Ramsay and Mr. W. A. Mathison were elected, ordained, and installed elders, and Mr. T. D. McRae a deacon. Mr. W. A. Mathison was made Clerk of the session. He served 40 years. He was succeeded by E. W. McInnis. Bob Acord is the present clerk of the session.

From the time of its organization in 1900 until November, 1902, the church was served by Rev. Charles Oberschmidt, but no sessional records were kept. On the 4th Sabbath in November, 1902, Rev. M. S. Smith was installed as pastor by a commission appointed by Meridian Presbytery. A manse was built the first year of his pastorate, and the church cleared of debt; Sunday School, Ladies' Aid, and Westminster League were doing active work. At the close of his pastorate in May, 1910, there were 99 communicants, 6 elders and 4 deacons.

The next pastor was Rev. J. W. Allen, installed in 1911 and served until December, 1918. The outstanding work during his pastorate was enlarging the

manse, building Sunday School rooms, organizing a mission Sunday School in a nice frame building, built and donated by Col. W. C. Wood in the mill part of town. Joe W. Wood, an elder in the Collins church, served as superintendent and teachers were selected from the Collins Sunday School. At the close of his pastorate there were 153 communicants, and a budget system of financing the church was adopted.

In a short time after this, the church suffered a great loss in membership, as the saw mills of the town closed; the mission church was moved out about three miles in a Presbyterian community, but still maintained as a mission church and Sunday School, (now a self supporting church with the name of McDonald).

The church was without a pastor for eighteen months when a call was issued to Rev. C. F. Hoffman, who was installed in October, 1920, and served two years.

Rev. W. A. Hall became pastor in January, 1922, and served until March, 1926. During his pastorate, the church suffered a great misfortune in the loss of the church building by a cyclone in the year of 1924. The congregation worshipped in the school building and Baptist Church until the completion of the new church. The old church building was built on the East side of the lot adjoining the manse.

The new church was built on the lot it now occupies. The new church, a modern building of stucco, with adequate Sunday School rooms, ladies' parlor and kitchen, was built at a cost of \$12,000.00. Mr. E. C. Herrin, architect, designed and supervised the building. He was an Elder of the First Presbyterian Church of Hattiesburg, Miss., and did the work without cost to the church.

Rev. J. W. Warren was pastor from April, 1926 until February, 1931. The first year of his pastorate the new church was cleared of debt and dedicated. The dedication service was conducted by Rev. M. S. Smith, the first pastor, and Rev. E. D. Holloway, a son of the church.

The Collins church has sent out three ministers: Rev. E. D. Holloway, Rev. Dwyn Mounger and Rev. Ralph McRaney. Miss Bessie Allen volunteered as a missionary while her father was pastor of this church, and was sent to Brazil. The statistical report at the close of 1930 showed 71 communicants and contributions of \$2354.65.

Rev. T. M. Lemly served the church as supply pastor in 1932-1933. He was followed by Rev. F. L. McFadden as pastor from 1934 to 1937. The last year of his pastorate he suffered a severe fall, and resigned. He was followed by Rev. Wm. E. Cox who served one year and resigned. Rev. L. A. Beckman began his pastorate in March, 1940, and served until 1946.

Rev. J. M. Looney, of Jackson, Tenn., was pastor from August, 1947 until January, 1950. During his ministry a Hammond Organ with chimes was installed, which added greatly to the music. The carpet was put on the floor of the auditorium and tile on the basement floor.

Dr. G. T. Preer came from Lafayette, La., in June, 1950, and left in 1954. Ministers since that time have been John L. Edwards, 1954-56; William G. Christie, 1957-59; Malcolm Bonner, 1960-1966; A. Cecil Moore, Jr., 1968-73; Roland Morris Travis, a student minister, 1973-1975; Norman A. Bagby, 1976-81; and Steven A. Jakes, 1982 to the present.

In addition to the above mentioned churches which were organized at the beginning of the town, there are seven other Protestant churches in Collins.

SCHOOLS

In recent years there has been an active alumni association of Collins High School students. The following history was written and presented at an alumni meeting. It was edited by Sibyl Bryant Steele from a letter by Mrs. Jessie Day Allred.

Collins High School was established in 1904. The school had an enrollment of 265 with Tom Boggan serving as principal.

In 1906 the school program included ten grades with a total enrollment of 305. Members of the school board during these years were: W. L. Williamson, T. C. Blount, C. H. Ramsay, M.D.; J. F. McCormick, W. M. Mounger, J. T. Russ, E. E. Stubbs and D. McIntosh. Teachers employed around 1906 were: Miss Oates, Miss Molly Graham, Miss Morgan, art; Miss Nance and Miss Weathersby, piano; Miss Emma Hooper, English; Miss Margaret Miller, Mrs. Calhoun, Miss Moore, Latin and history; Miss Ida Morgan, elocution and art.

As principal, Mrs. Calhoun was a very strict disciplinarian and not too many infringements of school rules were unnoticed. On one occasion a student was punished for using the word "golly" within hearing distance of one of the teachers. Mrs. Calhoun explained that using the word "golly" was taking God's name in vain.

B. L. Coulter, who was principal in 1915, was also a strict disciplinarian. Mr. Coulter, who was handsome and immaculately groomed, was well liked and respected by the student body.

Home economics was added to the school curriculum in 1914. Sewing and cooking were the courses offered in the home economics department. Miss Luie Ball, from Grand Rapids, Michigan, was the first home economics teacher.

A drinking fountain, built by someone in the community, furnished artesian water, pumped from a sawmill, for children on the playground. This water fountain was

made by joining four water pipes in the form of a rectangle. These pipes had holes on the top side to squirt water into the mouths of thirsty children. The wasted water was drained by a concrete trough and the concrete foundation had a walk way and a step for the younger ones to reach the water.

Toilet facilities were housed in two smaller buildings at the foot of the hill near the branch. These buildings consisted of bare necessities such as a long bench with appropriate sized oval shaped holes, covered by hinged rectangular covers when not in use. Plenty of old catalogs were available when needed.

The entire school was housed in one large two story building. Lower grades, primary through fourth grade, were housed on the lower floor.

Entry to the auditorium, principal's office, or studyhall was by way of two sets of stairs which converged into one stairway.

There were basketball and tennis courts as well as space for baseball. Girls played basketball in skirts and bloomers.

The school schedule included a period each day called "Chapel" during which time there was Bible reading and prayer.

The school board members were: W. L. Williamson, J. F. McCormick, W. M. Mounger, J. M. Russ, L. E. Stubbs, D. McIntosh.

Some students enrolled at this time were: Maud Allred, Katherine McCormick, O. J. Biglane, Sam Shoemaker, Ollie Jane Shoemaker, and Daisy Shoemaker.

Sometime around 1913, Col. W. C. Wood endowed the school with over 2,000 acres of land. The monies made from this land were to be used by the school but there is no information as to the sale of the land or the reason for selling. At one time \$18,000 was paid for oil leases.

Students graduating in 1916-18 were Julia Day, Nell Day, Bell Bond, Lottie Fairley, Grady Yates, Douglas Terrell, Gladys McCormick, Onolia, Myrtle, and Ruth Williamson, Margie Brown, Lucy Johns, Ed. and Winston Corley, Lamount Coulter, Knox Coulter, Granville and Archie Ramsay, Doyle Mayfield, and George McDonald.

In 1921 the principal was Ethan Allen. Other teachers were: Eunice Welch, Primer; Mrs. Bird, First Grade; Jessie Day, Second grade and basketball Assistant; Jessie Ramsay, Third grade; Charlotte Bell, Fourth grade; Mrs. Allen, Sixth grade; Marie White, Piano; Gertie Cato, Basketball; Catherine Bass, Mr. Granberry, and Miss Taylor.

In 1925-1932 the teachers were Mrs. Dora Clayton, Mrs. Pearl Edwards (Mrs. Pearl Duckworth Edwards), Mrs. Lora Blount, and Mrs. Frances Stubbs.

Often times during the Depression of the thirties, teachers were given certificates instead of money.

In the year 1935 Mr. Tucker was principal. Teachers were Miss Exa Ashley, Miss Jessie Ashley, Mrs. Avery, and Miss Rhoda Todd.

Some students were Harold Hart, James and Lawrence Pope, Mildred Pope, Ina Lee Pope, Herman Thames, Aleen Rogers, Robert McRaney, Wesley Day, Louise McRaney, and Lyndal Grady.

Captain Fleming was principal in 1936. H. J. Craft was elected principal in 1937.

The 1940 class members were Sibyl Bryant, Christine Carter, Teddy Cauthen, Charles Cook, Gertrude Daughtery, Ada Louise Fears, Willie Mae Meeks, William Clyde Miller, Irene Mooney, Willard McDonald, James Pickering, William Trest, Erma Speed, and Laura Frances Vaughn.

High school teachers were H. J. Craft, principal; Homer McMahan, coach; L. M. Prescott, agriculture; Geneva Middleton, homemaking; Jarmon Smith, mathematics; Bernice Bryant, mathematics; Miss Johnson, history; Willette Kelly, Latin; Rhoda Todd, English; David Livingstone, science; Onolia Williamson McRaney, Typing, shorthand, bookkeeping; and Lucy Terrell, piano.

School board members were: T. S. Bryant, D.D.S.; Phillip Kelly, Terrell Smith, Walter Stewart, and Douglas Terrell.

The 1940 class celebrated their fortieth anniversary in June, 1980. In order to include memories of that class and high school days at Collins in this history, some notes were taken on conversations concerning the different aspects of school life in those days.

Class members noted that the 1940 class was, so far as they knew, the first to publish a yearbook. This yearbook was entitled *Blue and Gold Memories*. The senior trip in 1940 was to the Gulf Coast in a truck owned by Earl McRaney. Each senior paid \$1.00 toward the expense of the trip.

A tradition at the school was the "belt line." Upperclassmen, who wanted to participate, brought belts to hit those going through the line.

April Fool's Day, April 1, was welcomed by some students as a time to skip school to fish, swim or "play hooky."

Halloween was another "fun time." The cemetery gate was always placed at the front door of the school building. A wagon, usually taken from a store display, was placed on top of the building. So the day after Halloween was a time for boys to return things that had been taken from public property.

The library was in the auditorium. It consisted of two or three book cases that had been placed in the auditorium.

Transportation was provided for rural students. These school trucks were owned

by the drivers. They were trucks with homemade bodies.

In 1948-49 Tom Speights was principal of the school.

In 1955 Mr. Hawthorne was principal.

Presently, Collins Elementary School is housed in the former Collins High School. The facility was built in 1940 on the site of the "old" school. In 1957, when several county schools were consolidated, the school was changed to serve grades one through seven. In 1970, the grades were changed to first through fifth when all of the county schools were intergrated. The present principal is Herman Campbell.

Collins Junior High School (grades 6-9) is housed in the former Carver High School building. This school was built in 1952 for black students, grades 1-12. Until 1952, grades 1-8 had attended school in a white frame building behind Macedonia Church. After the eighth grade, the students went to Hopewell, Piney Woods or Lincoln schools. Since 1952, four buildings have been added to the original three. The principal now is Larry Tripp.

Collins High School was built in 1957 and includes an athletic field, field house and band hall. Adjoining the high school is the Covington County Vocational-Technical Complex. Jack Bailey is principal.

CITY GOVERNMENT

City business is conducted in City Hall, built in 1926, but recently remodeled to allow for the expanded functions of city employees. The current officers are: V. O. Smith, Mayor; Mary Burnham, City Clerk; Malone Bryant, Fire Chief; and aldermen, Bobby Mooney, Arlis Pridgen, Jimmie Baggett, Billy McDonald, and Carlton McRaney.

Since 1906, Collins has had seventeen mayors. Their effective leadership has been a key reason for the continued growth of the city.

MAYOR	TERM OF OFFICE
S. H. Hemphill	12-04-06 to 12-31-06
H. M. McIntosh	01-01-07 to 12-31-08
C. H. Ramsey	01-01-09 to 02-02-20
T. D. Day, Jr.	02-03-20 to 12-31-20
W. W. Davis	01-01-21 to 06-30-24
W. U. Corley	07-01-24 to 12-31-26
G. H. Merrell	01-01-27 to 12-31-30
J. T. Dale	01-01-31 to 12-31-32
G. H. Merrell	01-02-33 to 12-31-36
J. D. Arrington	01-01-37 to 12-31-50
Hugh B. McIntosh	01-01-51 to 07-05-53
James D. Arrington	07-06-53 to 12-25-57
John K. Keyes	12-31-57 to 03-09-58
John B. Pope	03-10-58 to 05-01-62
John K. Keyes	05-02-62 to 06-25-62
Hugh McIntosh	06-26-62 to 03-25-65
W. O. Thomas, Jr.	03-25-65 to 06-10-65
Shelby Shows	06-11-65 to 06-30-69
R. E. Blackwell	07-01-69 to 05-25-81
Virginia Ann Blackwell	06-05-81 to 08-04-81
V. O. Smith	08-04-81 to Present

RESOURCES

Jackson Daily News, May 1, 1949, an article on Collins by Jack Hancock, reprinted by permission; "The Post Office History of Covington County" by Broox Sledge; "The Collins United Methodist Church History" by Dorothy Arrington Smith, 1977; Mrs. Herman Campbell; "Collins Baptist Church History," 1975; Flossie Lee; "Collins Presbyterian Church History" by Nanny C. Coulter, 1950; Bob Acord; Sibyl Bryant Steele; Mrs. Jessie Day Allred; V. O. Smith; Mary Burnham; Dianne Speed; Fred Barnes; Mrs. James D. Arrington; and Mrs. Greg Breland.



St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church of Collins, organized in 1965, has fourteen stained glass windows that are more than one hundred years old. The church's interior features hand-carved altar furniture.

(Sketch by Sally Phillips Buffington, used courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Holden Rhymes.)

MOUNT OLIVE

The town of Mount Olive anchors the northern part of Covington County with a lovely fourlane boulevard that once was canopied by 100 oaks. The oaks were planted in 1900 when the wide thoroughfare was laid off as Main Street (later to become a part of Old Highway 49). There was some resentment to such a wide street with complaints that "it will cost too much to keep it up." In spite of a tornado in April of 1969 and Hurricane Camille in August of 1969, many of the stately oaks remain.

Mount Olive is an unofficial boundary of the famous "Sullivan's Hollow." The "Hollow," basically triangular in shape, is also bordered by Mize and Taylorsville.

In the 1960's the four-lane Highway 49 passed Mount Olive by and a detour is now needed to observe this pleasant little town.

THE BEGINNING

In a history of Mount Olive written by Kevin Stevens, we learn that "John C. Calhoun is believed to be the first white man to have arrived in the area that is Mount Olive today." Calhoun and his family came between the years of 1810-1840. The first settlers were mostly of Scotch descent, from Alabama and North Carolina.

The land of the first settlers was acquired from the Indians who moved to Leake and Neshoba counties, but who returned annually to sell their brightly colored baskets. There is a plaque just north of Mount Olive marking the spot as the upper line of the Mount Dexter Choctaw Session Treaty Grant in 1805.

In a WPA research project on the history of Mount Olive, Mrs. Ruby Huff Jordan states that the first ten settlers in the area were: Charlie McNair, Daniel Calhoun, Rhoderic Mathison, Ben Leonard, Billy Rutland, Allen Johnson, Reuben McNair, Dan McInnis, Alec Fairly, John Deese and Duncan Buchanan.

Other pioneer family names were Dickson, McLeod, Day, McCollum, Pearce, Mason, Norwood, Reynolds, Connerly, Matthews, Nelson, Runnels, Polk, McRaney, Chain, Woodward, Holmes, Parkman, Pickering, Barnes, Lowery, Reddoch, McDonald, Caraway, Durr, May, Byrd, Vinson, Turner, Sharborough, King, Grumble, Thompson and Evans.

Until the route of the Gulf Ship Island Railroad was established, the area was little more than a scattering of houses and farms begun by these industrious pioneers. The coming of the railroad in 1900 would change the scene.

The location of the town in the midst of this farmland was determined by a railroad surveyor in the mid 1890s when he jammed a stick down in the middle of a cornfield and said, "This is where the depot will be."



The city of Mount Olive celebrated her 85th anniversary in May of 1985 with a weekend-long celebration. The parade through town included this "birthday cake" which was later parked in front of the City Hall. (Photo by Dick Tarbutton)

Like so many other tiny villages in Mississippi, the coming of the railroad was the beginning of a boom for Mount Olive. The tracks were completed in 1899 and the town was incorporated on May 18, 1900. The two-mile square town had as its first officials: Franklin Fairley, mayor, and Willie Powell, marshal. Tom Day served as one of the first three aldermen. The names of the other two have become unreadable with age.

Stories vary as to the origin of the name Mount Olive, but the correct spelling of the name on the charter is "Mount Olive" and not the shortened form, "Mt. Olive." One story says that it was named after a town in North Carolina that had been home to some of the early settlers.

Another version is that the name was taken from a post office named Mount Olive after an old Presbyterian Church named Olivet. This post office was located about three miles out of town. When the location of the post office was moved closer to the present town, the name moved as well.

MOUNT OLIVE POST OFFICE

The postmasters of this post office and the dates of the postmasters follow:

Reuben McNair, Sept. 22, 1858 to May 17, 1867; Office closed from May 17, 1867 to Apr. 3, 1876.

Neil M. Smith, February 13, 1874 to Apr. 3, 1876; Reuben McNair, Apr. 3, 1876 to Nov. 20, 1876; Joseph Gilbert, Nov. 20, 1876 to May 15, 1882; Alexander (unreadable), May 15, 1882 to May 8, 1893; Frank Fairly, May 8, 1893 to Jan. 30, 1900; Joel R. Stewart, Jan. 30, 1900 to Mar. 6, 1902.

Frank Fairly, Mar. 6, 1902 to July 28,

1919; Minnie S. Sudduth, July 28, 1919 to Feb. 4, 1926; John N. (?) McLeod, Feb. 4, 1926 to Dec. 16, 1926; Marvin S. McNair, Dec. 16, 1926 to July 1, 1928; Birdisue Byrd, June 1, 1928 to June 15, 1934; Mrs. Beulah P. Herrington, June 15, 1934 to June 30, 1949; Mrs. Sammy Jo Crawford, July 1, 1949 — present.

THE BOOM IS ON

By 1910, the population was at 1,077. Before the end of the 1930s there would be many first:

- Electricity and running water came before 1908.
- In 1900 the railroad depot also became the post office.
- A volunteer fire department was organized with the town's incorporation.
- The Mount Olive First Baptist Church was organized on the fifth Sunday of April 1900.
- In November of 1900 a group of citizens met to discuss the beginning of the Mount Olive Presbyterian Church.
- In 1901 the name of the older Pleasant Grove Methodist Church was changed to Mount Olive Methodist Church and it was moved to the present location.
- Many of the lovely old homes that grace Mount Olive were built in the early 1900s.
- The first printing press was set up in 1902 by A. J. Pittman who owned and operated it.
- In 1918, Dr. M. L. Flynt began to operate a small hospital. (The two-story building burned on Christmas Eve 1959).
- In 1924, the Brown Miller Pickle Company began operation. (The plant closed in 1973).
- Main Street was paved in 1931.

MOUNT OLIVE IN 1937

A description of the business district in 1937 is taken from the writings of Mrs. Ruby Huff Jordan: "A list of business and town buildings from the Baptist Church on Main Street to Greentree Hotel on right, headed east: Baptist Church, Texaco Filling Station, Pan-Am Filling Station, Rawls' Cash Store, Old J. B. Byrd Store (not in operation), Sandwich Shop, Grocery Store, Bank, Gatewoods' General Store, Calhoun Drug Store, Hotel, Filling Station. To the left, headed East from Baptist Church on Main Street are: Lampton-Rawls, City Hall, Post Office, Calhoun-Fairley, Dickson Motor Co., and Filling Station."

Mrs. Jordan also describes two "smith shops" that were operating at the time. "One of the smith shops has an electric blower, the other has a patented hand bower. These shops have electric drills, blow torches and electric hammers, which enable the smiths to do more work and better work at lower cost."

"Pot hooks are made of small round iron rods. The hooks are fastened together with a ring and have a hook on the ends. Dog irons (andirons) are made of different kinds of scrap iron, some from buggy axles, auto axles and some from common steel."

Pam Johnson relates the following conversation with Mrs. Maude Roberts in 1984 regarding the "bustling timber and agricultural trading center."

"Oh, it was a thriving little town," remembers Mrs. Roberts who spent her girlhood in the Rock Hill Community just south of town.

She and her brothers and sisters traveled to the Mount Olive school and paid tuition to the then-private institution.

"Lampton-Rawls and Calhoun-Fairley were the main stores then," she said. "Mr. Alex Evans handled all the cotton. There were a compress, two gins, Mrs. Jernigan's restaurant, and Mr. Fairley ran the post office on Main Street." Frank Fairley was Post Master from 1902-1919.

Another landmark, the Green Tree Hotel, once a favored spot for weary travelers, and the scene of many a jitterbug contest in the 1940s, was built in 1898 by the Tyrone family. Recently it was hoped that the hotel could be renovated for the offices of Dr. Joe Johnston and his son, Dr. Word Johnston, but upon closer examination, this seems to be a structurally unsound move, and the building was razed during the summer of 1985.

In the early days, there was a horse race track in the town which was a popular attraction during the Mount Olive fair days. The track was located off Highway 35 near the Okatoma Creek.

Mrs. Jordan's 1937 writings recall other entertainment as well: "The surrounding

woodlands afford rather a nice place for squirrel, rabbit, opossum, coon and bird hunting." But she further reminded hunters to "ask permission to hunt on the farmer's lands and don't injure and destroy his chickens or cattle or allow your dog to worry them!"

MOUNT OLIVE TODAY

The 1980 census gives a count of 993 for the town. While the quantity of the population has not vastly changed, the quality of life of the population has continued to improve. Sewers were installed in 1960, a new water tank in 1965, a town hall in 1975, a library in 1981 and a new elementary school building in 1979.

Mount Olive citizens are extremely loyal to their school and have recently been very outspoken in its behalf when it looked as if it might be consolidated.

The first school of record in the area was built in 1863 on a lot donated by Reuben McNair. The first high school was a two-story frame building located where the present school is. The school today offers a well-rounded curriculum from French to poultry judging. The principal is Ramon Johnston.

The town's industries include Neco Manufacturing Company, which employs over 250 in the manufacture of electric blankets, and F. J. McGill Mfg. Co., which employs 95 and manufactures Mount Olive jeans. The town's largest employers are W. E. Blain and Sons Contractors and Blain Sand and Gravel Company, established by former Mayor W. E. Blain on January 1, 1945.

Mount Olive residents are justly proud of these notables who are theirs by birth: Dr. Chester Swor, in his 70s, continues to be a sought-after speaker and author for college age groups; Miss Juanita Byrd, missionary to China; and Ray Perkins, University of Alabama football coach. Other native sons include the late Wiley J. Ingram, World War II recipient of the British Military Medal for Valor and flying ace Eddie Russell. Mount Olive is home to Covington Sheriff Carl Leonard, Representative Joe Warren (Dist. 91) and Tax Assessor Lucy M. Leonard.



*The city of Mount Olive celebrated her 85th anniversary in May of 1985 with a weekend-long celebration.
(Photo by Dick Tarbutton)*

The current city officials are: Hugh Warren, mayor; Barbara Harvey, city clerk; Jimmy Sims, police captain; Jackie Dickson, fire chief; and aldermen, Ival Murphy, Joe Joe Flynt, Robert Bryant, Jack King and Pam Johnson.

SOME THINGS DO NOT CHANGE

In 1937 Mrs. Jordan made this evaluation of Mount Olive. "The McNairs, Calhouns, Fairlys and various other early settlers brought to this locality only the cleanest type manners, in the very truest puritan type. In this small town there is a 'Grooved way' to follow. The real city fashions are carried on smaller scales to fit the requirements of the town clubs, church organizations, and fraternal organizations. . . . The many ways of the older settlers are carried on and the traits of the forefathers are still to be detected in the routine of the town."

The social life of the town continues to revolve around the school, church and club activities. One person you are likely to see at any or all the activities is Mrs. Zoe Yates. At age 85 she still plays the piano for three services a week at the First Baptist Church, accompanies the Jubilation Senior Citizens Choir, the high school choir, and a barber-shop quartet called the Zoe Boys.

Another one of her musical joys is participation in the Mount Olive Music Lovers Club. This group was organized in 1927 and one of the charter members, Mrs. Faye Dickson, continues to be active in the club's work. In addition, Mrs. Dickson has been lauded for charity work with the state March of Dimes and the Mississippi American Legion Auxiliary.

In an interview with Kevin Stevens in 1979, the late Mrs. Zuma Johnson McNair (descendant of the early settlers) seemed to have summed up the feelings of most citizens who live in Mount Olive. "I think we have some mighty fine people around here."

The "mighty fine people" of Mount Olive celebrated the 85th anniversary of the founding of their town on May 18, 1985. The day began with a parade and ended with a fireworks display. Pioneer descendants proudly wore badges to show their heritage.

Reports are that this birthday party was such a success that it may become an annual event.

RESOURCES

Information for this article was obtained from an article by Pam Johnson in the Jan. 16, 1984 *Hattiesburg American*, the private notes of Pam Johnson; a paper written by Laura Drummond; a paper written by Kevin Stevens; the WPA writings of Ruby Huff Jordan; Bobby McClendon, librarian at the Mount Olive Library; and *Sullivan's Hollow* by Chester Sullivan.

SEMINARY

The small town of Seminary in Covington County was at its beginning a seminary—the Zion Seminary, to be exact. This school, at one time, offered classes from the first grade through college and was well-known for its pre-law, pre-medicine, music and theology departments. The enrollment reached as high as 500 students.

Rev. A. R. Graves of Saratoga, N. Y., first started the school in 1845 near the falls of the Okatoma River where he was given 25 acres of land by W. A. Leggett. He built a pine-pole schoolhouse with dirt chimneys and split-pole floors. Graves was a Presbyterian minister and he returned frequently to New York to collect funds for the school. He invested the money in a sawmill and a brickyard. The industries prospered and they also produced the lumber and brick needed for building a large two-story schoolhouse and two two-story dormitories.

On his trips north he also recruited teachers, particularly from the states of New York and Vermont. The faculty was very prestigious and included a number of Presbyterian ministers. Rev. George Taylor and Rev. George Moore were two of the number. The school was very innovative and was said to be 40 years ahead of its time.

As the seminary began to grow, so did the need for new buildings. Students were coming from all over Mississippi and from adjoining states as well. Students from the wealthiest and most influential families were placed under the care of Rev. Graves. Twenty cottages were built by wealthy planters for their children's residences. Family servants would come to take care of the students in the three-room cottages while they were attending the seminary.

Unfortunately, in 1861 the Civil War brought to a close the progress of the school when Rev. Graves entered the Confederate Service as chaplain. Three of his sons also served in the Confederate Army. During the war, all but one of the seminary buildings burned. The one building saved was the auditorium and it accidentally burned in 1890, thus erasing the last evidence of the school.

THE TOWN OF SEMINARY

The school is no more, but the name remains. For some unexplained reason, the town was not incorporated until 1899 and it took the name of the seminary. Population of the town has fluctuated somewhat during the years, due primarily to the timber industry.

Year	Population
1910.....	526
1920.....	360



This building of the Zion School was built in 1900 on the site of the Zion Seminary, established in 1845. The Seminary had at one time over 500 students from all over Mississippi and adjoining states, studying pre-law, pre-medicine and theology and music. (Photo courtesy of SHS Library and Aaron Crosby)

1930.....	325
1940.....	291
1950.....	345
1960.....	288
1970.....	269
1980.....	375

Due to widespread fires in 1921 and 1925 which destroyed municipal records, a complete listing of the mayors of the town is impossible to compile, but some of the government leaders have been John W. Watson (1899-1913), J. M. Welch (1913-1920), W. M. Hill (1920-1927), W. T. Aultman (1927-1928), Jack Conner (1928-1932), W. E. King (1932-1940), Coy Kelly (1940-1952), W. T. Aultman (1952-1956), and L. B. Hemeter (1956-).

POST OFFICES AT SEMINARY

The first post office at Seminary was named Zion Seminary and it opened in 1867. It was closed in 1876 and when the office was reopened in 1895 it was named Seminary.

ZION SEMINARY

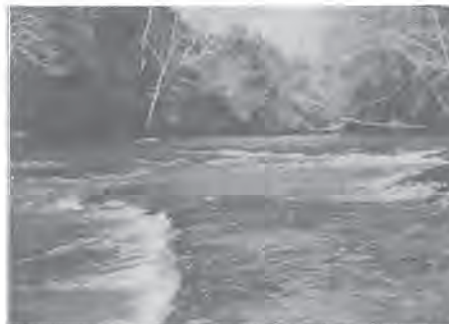
James A. Stubbs, Apr. 22, 1857 to Feb. 11, 1859; Azariah R. Graves, Feb. 11, 1859 to Nov. 15, 1859; Charles M. Edmonson, Nov. 15, 1859 to Jan. 30, 1867. Office closed from Jan. 30, 1867 to June 24, 1872. John C. Napier, June 24, 1872 to July 6, 1876. Office closed July 6, 1876.

SEMINARY

Office reopened as Seminary on Oct. 31, 1895. Haynes W. Napier, Oct. 31, 1895 to

Dec. 11, 1897; John M. Napier, Dec. 11, 1897 to June 27, 1899; Laura Hosey, June 27, 1899 to Aug. 4, 1900; Mattie Tannehill, Aug. 4, 1900 to Sept. 17, 1902; James A. Robertson, Sept. 17, 1902 to Dec. 16, 1904; Richard D. Bounds, Dec. 16, 1904 to June 13, 1906.

John H. Willard, June 13, 1906 to July 1, 1913; Frank G. Napier, July 1, 1913 to July 3, 1925; Georgia Mixon, July 3, 1925 to Sept. 22, 1925; John C. McGowan, Sept. 22, 1925 to Apr. 27, 1930; Mrs. Corrie F. Taylor, Apr. 27, 1930 to June 11, 1934.



The legend of the Seminary Falls on the Okatoma Creek says that Indian lovers jumped to their death rather than be separated as their families demanded. Today the falls are enjoyed by canoeists, numbering in the thousands, as they float this beautiful waterway. (Photo by Bob Hamill)

Mrs. Erma L. Morris, July 1, 1934 to Jan. 16, 1941; Archie W. Morrie, Jan. 16, 1941 to Nov. 16, 1941; Hershel Loamma Lott, Nov. 16, 1941 until he left on military leave Mar. 14, 1943; Mrs. Edith King Lott, June 1, 1943 to Dec. 31, 1945; Hershel Loamma Lott returned from military duty on Dec. 31, 1945 and served until April 1971; Marvin A. Todd, April 1971 to February 28, 1985; Jimmy M. Wallace, June 10, 1985 to present.

SEMINARY CHURCHES

The turn of the century brought the beginning of three churches in Seminary.

Seminary Methodist Church was organized in 1907. It is possible that the Seminary congregation may have been a part of the Williamsburg charge as early as 1890.

The Seminary Baptist Church we know today was first called Concord Baptist Church and was organized on December 3, 1886. The church has had a total of five houses of worship since moving to the present location in 1897.

In 1893, Alexander Newton came to Seminary and was instrumental in building a schoolhouse. The schoolhouse also served as a church for Presbyterians and as a public building for court sessions. It was a one-room building about 32 feet by 60 feet with a front porch and loft overhead. It is believed that the Seminary Presbyterian Church ceased to exist about 1936.

A very active congregation in Seminary presently is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

EVENTS IN SEMINARY HISTORY

Seminary has had an interesting history.

- Martin Sennett (Mike) Conner, the forty-fourth governor of the State of Mississippi moved to Seminary when he was nine years old. He returned to Seminary to open his law practice after graduating from the University of Mississippi and Yale University.

- Dr. James Harbert Temple came to Seminary in 1903 to practice medicine and was included in the three-volume historical collection, *Mississippi*, compiled by Dunbar Rowland, director of the Mississippi Archives and History, 1907. Dr. Temple continued to practice in Seminary until 1920.

- The only newspaper ever published in Seminary was *The Seminary Breeze*. It is believed to have been published by Jimmie Walker from 1901-1906.

- The first brick building in town was the office of Dr. John J. Bethea (on the site of the present State Bank and Trust Co. Branch). It is thought this brick building helped stop the fire of 1925 from engulfing the entire town.

- Alex Lott had a sweet potato canning factory and a sugar mill on the west side of the Okatoma from 1915-1930.

- The Bank of Seminary was established in 1905 with a capital of \$30,000 with J. M. Graham as the president and J. W. Wright as the cashier. The bank closed during the Depression.

- A legend is told about the Falls on the Okatoma that an Indian couple were denied the right to marry because they were of different tribes, and unable to face life without each other, they plunged to their deaths by jumping hand-in-hand into the falls.

SEMINARY TODAY

The proud history of Seminary continues today under the leadership of Mayor Lawrence Hemeter. Other present city officials are Dimple Mooney, clerk; and aldermen, Shirley Beasley, David Daniel, Bobby Wayne Aultman, Jerry Bullock and Jack Crosby. The town government is actively working to improve water and sewage systems and to resurface all streets.

The city is also proud of the recently renovated railroad depot. The depot was built around the turn of the century when the railroad first came to Seminary. It is currently housing the town library and the Nutrition Center for Senior Citizens. The building is also used as a meeting place for various community groups.

Another recent addition to the community is the new Ruritan Club House. The \$100,000 facility was doanted by former Seminarians Rodney and Wiley Fairchild in memory of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Fairchild. This service organization has been in existence for approximately 25 years.

Another cause for pride is the Seminary Attendance Center. Offering education to grades 1-12, the schools 875 students are housed on the same site as the Zion School.

Mayor Hemeter says that the town is currently negotiating with one or more industries about moving into an already existing building.

Another activity that is becoming big business in Seminary is the increasing popularity of canoeing on the Okatoma. Many visitors rent equipment locally and begin their trip with the guidance of local rental agents.

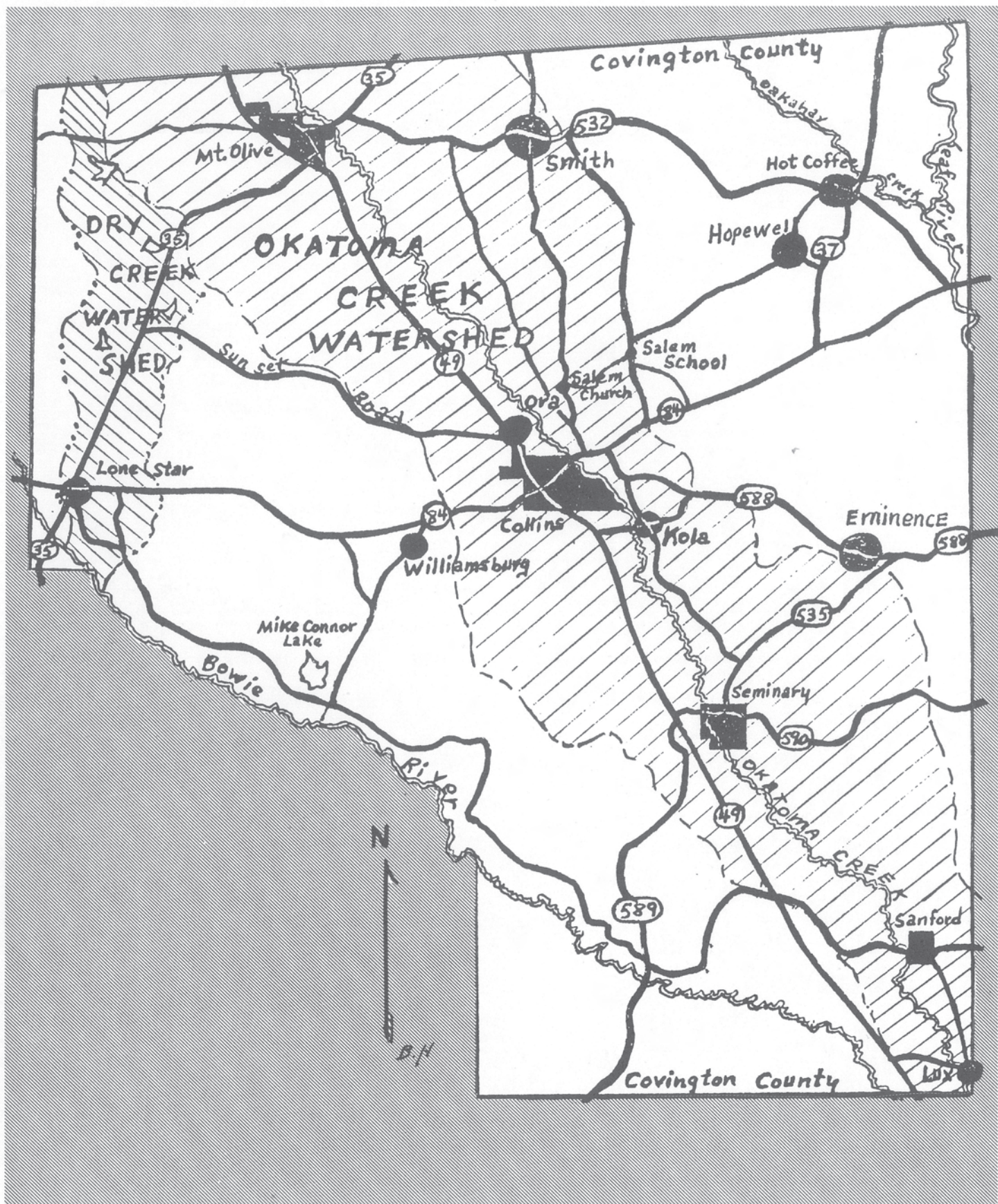
A spirit of pride in their heritage is evident in many of the citizens of this community. Seminary exists as a durable monument to traditions first implanted by the Zion Seminary and its founder.

RESOURCES

Information for this chapter was obtained from *A History of Seminary, Mississippi* by Jerry Windsor; Mayor Lawrence Hemeter; high school librarian, Aaron Crosby; an article in *The Hattiesburg American*, Feb. 19, 1954, and Cathy Aultman.



This photo of the Hemeter Mercantile Company of Seminary was taken around 1910. Issac A. Stewart stands on the ground looking at some cotton. S. N. Lowery leans on the wagon while W. L. Hemeter stands on the wagon tongue. It is thought the others in the photo are Von B. Hemeter and Warren Booth. (Photo courtesy of Mayor Lawrence Hemeter)



Section II

ANGIE

Angie was the name of a post office in the area of Ora (just north of Collins). The location is unknown, and the only postmaster was Sarah J. Blacklidge, who served from May 27, 1903, to May 31, 1904. After that the office was closed and the mail sent to Ora.

RESOURCE

"The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

ARBO

Up the railroad from Ora were several towns and settlements that grew up with the lumber business. On a map dated 1900, they were Feagin, Leek (Arbo), Mish, Shepard, Bracking, and Mount Olive, heading north from Ora in the order listed.

There appears to be little or no record of Feagin, Shepard, and Bracking, but we do have some recall of Leek (Arbo) and Mish. The first settlers at Arbo seem to have come about 1880 and they were Frank Campbell, John T. Deese and a Dr. Carr. Walter Leek from "up north" moved in around 1900 and built the Leek Saw Mill Company. The population grew and the little town grew. There was a depot, barber shops, cafes, mercantile establishments and some reports say a school and church.

In 1905 the Leek Mill was sold and became known as the Lumber and Mineral Company. The change of ownership also caused the change of name from Leek to Arbo. The Leek post office was opened in 1903 with Steven T. Dent as postmaster. The name was changed to Arbo on May 22, 1905. Other postmasters to follow were Charles W. Davidson, David E. Anderson, Alney Austin, Erastus W. Bryant, and Henry T. Jones. Service was discontinued and the mail sent to Mount Olive on January 31, 1919.

The town continued to prosper until the mill burned in 1916. As late as the 1930s there were two stores remaining, the Lumber-Mineral Mercantile C. and John Gates Store.

RESOURCES

Map of Covington County, dated 1909 belonging to Mrs. Orland Lott, and the WPA work of an unknown writer.

BASSFIELD

Bassfield was a part of Covington County until 1906 when the county of Jefferson Davis was formed. The following are the postmasters who served the office there while it was in Covington County:

Alexander E. Bass, July 16, 1895 to July 23, 1902.

James G. Napier served from Jan. 27, 1899 until Oct. 14, 1899 with the notation "rescinded" entered above his name. C. Clark was appointed July 23, 1902 and served until Oct. 23, 1902, with an entry above his name "declined."

Hester Clark, Oct. 23, 1902 to June 4, 1904.

James M. Clark, June 4, 1904 to July 6, 1906.

Notation dated July 6, 1906, "Now in Jefferson Davis county."

RESOURCE

"The Post Office History of Covington County" by Broox Sledge.

BETHEL (Near Jones County)

The Bethel United Methodist Church near the Jones County line in Covington County is located about midway between Highways 588 and 84. The church gave its name to the surrounding community. A history of the church, written by Ralph Robertson in 1975, states that the church owes its existence to "ten godly women." These ten women were the organizers and charter members of the church.

The first meeting was held on July 11, 1854, with these charter members: Mrs. Mary F. Welch, Mrs. Jane Patton, Mrs. Sally Welch, Misses Susie, Judith, Polly, Pharaby, Martha, Nancy and Rachel Welch. The first meetings were probably held in the home of Bryan Welch or James Welch. Most of the women were daughters of James Welch.

One of the founding women was Mary Worthy Welch, daughter of William Worthy, a devoted Methodist, and the wife of Richard Welch. She was a true pioneer and reared a large family who later joined and became active in the church she helped to organize.

B. Z. Welch says that "Mary Welch feared no one and fought for what she believed to be right. Her husband entered the Confederate Army early in the War and left her alone with several children. At that time the section was overrun by deserters and raiders from the Union Army. Many a time she was awakened by someone trying to steal her hogs and cattle. She would light a torch of fat splinters (pine kindling) and go after the thieves. They would, of course, vanish in the darkness as they did not wish to be identified."

It would seem that the first male member of the church was Timothy Ransom, the son of Richard and Mary Frances Welch. He became a member and a steward of the church as a teenager. He kept this position until his death in 1925.

The first house of worship, built in 1858, was 20 x 30 feet long and was made of hewn pine logs. The building of the church was a community effort.

The pulpit, located in the center of the church, was a box-like structure about four feet high with an opening on each side. A bench that would accommodate two people



This is the first building of the Bethel Methodist Church, built in 1858. The building was replaced in 1890 and was moved to the farm of John Welch, where it was used for a dwelling until 1962, when it burned. The windows were added to the building in 1888 when it was used to house the Bethel Line School. Note the covered graves in the cemetery. (Photo courtesy of Velma Thompson and Homa Thompson)

was the only furniture on the podium. A twelve inch board put on top of the pulpit served as a place for the Bible, hymnal and other literature the preacher might have.

The seating in the church consisted of a tier of seats on each side of the pulpit and two tiers of seats in front. It was the custom for the women to sit on the left side and men on the right side.

Ralph Robertson recalls that one problem with the buildings of the day was that animals would bed down under the floor. The problem became so serious at one time that the matter was brought up at a stewards' meeting. The protracted meeting was coming up soon and several hogs had taken to spending much time on the cool dirt under the church. Robertson says that "if you have never been sitting in church and heard three or four hogs pushing, shoving, and grunting during a church service, you cannot appreciate the importance of this discussion." The problem was solved when Lonnie Wilson agreed to wall up around the building so that the hogs could not get under the church. The older boys

were still needed to chase the hogs, and sometimes cattle, away from the church area at dinner time.

The old log church was replaced in 1890 by a more "modern church," which was built across the road from the first building. That building is still the foundation and core of the church that stands today. The same ten women who helped to construct the first church, helped in building the second church. This second church was the first building in the vicinity made of sawn and dressed lumber. The new church was highlighted by candles, reflector lamps and lanterns.

The Bethel Methodist Church has never had a large membership during its 131-year history, but it has had a dedicated membership. Some of its members were influential in organizing three other area churches: Hebron, Oak Bowery and Eminence.

In the early years of the church, the stewards would take a wagon and go to the homes of the members to collect produce for the minister. The preacher often went home with his buggy loaded with chickens, molasses, potatoes, bacon, hams and other farm goods.

LIFESTYLE IN THE EARLY BETHEL COMMUNITY

The way we pay ministers today is not the only thing that has changed. Ellis P. Robertson of Newton, Kansas, recalled in a letter written in 1964 that as the youngest of his family he struggle to keep up as they walked the 1½ miles from their home to church.

He also recalls that the walk was worth the effort on the days that "dinner on the ground" was served, even though the children had to wait their turn after the men. These dinners would usually be planned during the protracted meeting (revival). The timing was set to occur during "fodder pulling" time. He remembers that after the meal the women and the men would separate to different shaded areas to have "grove meetings." These consisted of praying and hymn singing.

The young people were always thirsty after these dinners and meetings and would walk to the old spring down under the hill. The "young blades" would dip a dipper full of fresh cool water and give it to their favorite girl friend. E. P. Robertson and B. Z. Welch both recall that on the way back up the path to the church, a boy might get to hold his girl's hand briefly.

Ralph Robertson recalls that he was introduced to Sunday School parties by his Aunt Maye Robertson. She was an old maid who lived her religion "24 hours a day, seven days a week." They played Ring around the Rosies, Drop the Handkerchief, Spin the Bottle, and Dodge Ball. The parties ended with cookies and lemonade.

But all was not play, as there was always



This school photo at Bethel Line School was made at the Bethel Methodist Church about 1920. The young man in the center is holding a basketball that has the initials, BLBT, for Bethel Line Basketball Team. Two young men on the back row have, what appears to be, their initials written on the palm of their hands. The one closest to the center has the initials "LL," while the other has the initials "DF." (Photo courtesy of W. C. Robertson.)

work to be done on the family farm. One important job was the making of candles. These were made by using candle molds. A string was placed in the mold and hot tallow (melted fat from cattle and sheep) was poured into the molds. When the candles cooled they were ready for use.

Candles were also used to light the Christmas tree, a large holly, in the church, according to B. Z. Welch. The tree was placed in the center of the church for all to admire. Stockings were filled with candy, oranges, apples, walnuts, Brazil nuts, pecans, dolls, cheap fire crackers, French harps (harmonicas), crackers, and cakes. All of these were for the children, as few adults exchanged presents. The Santa Claus was from some place unknown and mysteriously disappeared when all the gifts had been delivered.

Singing was an important part of many early churches. Singing Schools, while not considered a function of the church, were endorsed and encouraged by the church and were many times held in the church. B. Z. Welch remembers that ten days were spent in teaching the fundamentals of music and in learning sacred hymns. The text book used was the Sacred Harp and the first song learned was "Twilight." On the last day of school the public was invited, a picnic was held and an exhibition was given of what the students had accomplished.

Leona Downing remembers going to two such schools at Bethel Methodist in 1897 and 1898 and the teachers were Jim Gentry and M. J. Gieger.

BETHEL LINE SCHOOL

The beginning date of the Bethel Line School in the Bethel Methodist Church Community in east central Covington County is unknown. More than likely it opened about the same time as the organization of the church, 1854. It was definitely in operation before 1888 as the log pole school house burned and school was held in the first church building. (A second building was built for the church.)

Avis Welch Vignes says in a letter dated November 16, 1954 that "the school would open for two months in the summer and two months in the winter. The only time there was an eight month school was when Mrs. Stratford taught, and the pupils attended from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. My father, Dr. B. Z. Welch, said the old stove pipe in the room would catch on fire every day and it would have to be put out."

Some other teachers of the school were Dr. Hiram Williams, Miss Pope (later Mrs. Crawson), Mr. McNeal, M. L. Gieger, James O. Reddoch, and W. C. Robertson (principal 1934-1936).

Avis Welch Vignes tells of 21 students who attended the school in the early 1900s and all went on to attend college. These were B. Z. Welch, James Welch, Ransom Welch, Tim D. Welch, Sharp Cranford, Sharp Cranford, II and Roland Cranford (all medical doctors); W. S. Welch, Bill Cranford, and Tandy Cranford (all lawyers); Jack Cranford, Baptist preacher; W. A. Welch, teacher; R. R. Welch, animal husbandry; W. Estus Welch, contractor; Bessie Welch, teacher and Deann of

the New Orleans Bible Institute and Judson College; Caleb Welch, Marvin Gieger, chemist at Mississippi A. & M. College; Fanny Welch, college professor; Mary Diane Welch, teacher at the School for the Blind in Baton Rouge; and Zada Welch, teacher. One student, Nancy Welch Stein, entered college, but was unable to finish due to illness.

In 1903 the Welch Lodge was built (about 200 yards from the church) and school was held in the bottom floor and the lodge met on the top floor. The school closed about 1938, but the Welch Lodge is still active.

RESOURCES

Homa Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. John Redmon, Velma Thompson, histories of the Bethel Methodist Church written by Avis Welch Vignes, Ralph Robertson, Ellis P. Robertson, B. Z. Welch, Marvin Gieger, Leona Downing, L. R. Robertson, W. Amos Welch, Addie Clark Welch, the WPA writings of an unknown writer, Broox Sledge, and W. C. Robertson.

BETHEL (Between Seminary and Sanford)

The Bethel Community in the southeast part of Covington County takes its name from the Bethel Baptist Church located between Seminary and Sanford on the Bethel Church Road. Church records, as kept by Jessie R. Bullock the church clerk in 1890, show that the church was organized on July 10, 1881. The first location of the church was on public property that belonged to the federal government and the first meeting place was a brush arbor. The arbor was located near the present building site.

Several churches in this area used a brush arbor for church meetings because they were simple and easy to erect. A framing was made of rough lumber and small logs; then brush (leafy branches) were piled on top and this provided relief from the hot sun. The seats were made from larger split logs. (See illustration)

Soon after its organization, the Bethel Church designated a piece of property for a cemetery. The first to be buried in the cemetery was an infant by the name of Simon P. Sanford, who was buried on September 9, 1890. Since that time there have been over 600 burials in the cemetery.

The first baptisms of the church were at Sanford Mill, now known as the Gandy Swim Hole on Bullock Creek near Sanford. In 1915, the church constructed its first baptistry which was an outdoor baptistry. It was made of wood forming a reservoir beneath the ground surface. Water was furnished by a nearby spring. Later the baptistry was renovated by replacing the wood

liner with concrete. Other baptism services were held in the Bullock Creek and the Shows Swim Hole on the old Monroe Road. In 1961, a new metal baptistry was installed in the church.

The church has had three buildings. The first was constructed soon after the organization in 1881 and was a log building. The seats were made of split logs and wooden pegs and heat was furnished by a stick and dirt chimney.

The second building was built after 1901 and was a wood frame structure located near the present building site. It was a rectangular shaped building with vertical wood siding, a wood shingled roof, a rough sawed wood floor, and kerosene lamps for lighting.

In the summer of 1950, this building was torn down and work was begun on a new rectangular-shaped wooden structure. Since then this building has been renovated and modernized at least six times.

In 1965, the church built its first pastor's home, which is located across from the church. In 1979 the pastorium was completely remodeled.

PASTORS OF THE BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH

Hugh Graham, M. H. Brodus, J. P. Merritt, Steven Mayfield, E. E. Williams,

W. F. Sheppard, R. J. Loper, G. W. Boyd, H. D. Williams, W. S. Wade, D. V. Jones, J. M. Stuart, Carl Sullivan, Loyd Thomas, B. H. Stringer, W. L. Broome, Huston Rawls, George Shows, Douglas Davis, Millard Bounds, J. W. Pope, Earl Williams, Alton Holifield, Ollis Sanford, and Wayne Woolwine.

CLERKS OF BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH

J. R. (Jess) Bullock, J. W. Carter, Jr., R. L. Garrick, A. B. Morgan, Sr., C. N. Townsend, Magdalene Eavenson, Doris Sumrall, Fredna Sumrall, and Bernice Morgan.

MT. TABOR SCHOOL

The Mt. Tabor School was organized in the Bethel Community about 1898. The exact date of its establishment is unknown, but it was definitely after the organization of the Bethel Baptist Church in 1881 and before 1900.

Buford Ingram, a student of the Mt. Tabor school, said there was a Mt. Tabor Holiness Church two miles west of Bethel Baptist Church, and the school took its name from the church. The first building was one room and was about ¼ mile west of the present site of the Bethel Baptist Church.



The date at the bottom of this photo of a group of Mt. Tabor School students appears to be December 1921. The students are as follows: (left to right) (top row) Ida Mooney, Johnny Sanford, Myrtle Sullivan, Buford Ingram, Viola Prince, Della Tullos, Coy Kelly, Jewel Louis, Dolphus Louis, Ozzie Windham, Pearl Bullock and Nettie Bullock. (Second row) Louis Ingram, Ola May Sanford, Clare Prince, Alma Mooney, Luther Sanford, Bura Ingram, Minnie Sullivan, Lawrence Padgett, Daphne Fairchild, Lucy Mae Ingram, Hattie Pierce, Sada Fairchild, Elmer Bullock, Devis Thrash, Archie Ray Ingram and Ruby Padgett. Mr. Ingram was unable to identify all the children on the third and fourth rows, but some who were in that age group were Lawrence Morgan, Wilson Prince, Kelvin Sanford, Tom Padgett, Ruth Sanford and Effie Lee Ingram. Likewise, the students seated on the ground were difficult to identify, but some of that age group were Zelton Ingram, Kathryn Morgan, Angelina Bullock and Mary Jane Ingram. (Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Buford Ingram)

The second building was three-fourths of a mile west of Bethel Baptist Church and it too was a one-room building; however, another room was added in 1912. This enabled the school to have two teachers rather than only one teacher.

Mr. Ingram also recalls that it was the job of the students to keep the school fire burning by gathering wood in the nearby forest.

On September 26, 1922, the Bethel Baptist Church sold property to the school and a third building was built, this one located where the present church is.

Mr. Ingram said that he hauled one load of lumber from Collins to the building site for the third building. The main reason for the larger building was that the Pine Ridge School in Jones County combined with the Mt. Tabor School and the new site was a better location for both groups of students.

The following is a list of some of the teachers at Mt. Tabor as remembered by Buford Ingram, Mackie Newton and John Redmon: Ora Floyd, Fannie Lee Calhoun, Lilly McGrew, Maggie Aultman, Coy Kelly, Della Tullos, Sam Moore, Alice Newton, Wallace B. Blackwell, Maude Turnage, Marie Walters, Jackie Pierce, Alex Newton, Florence Monger, Bernice Jones, Vondell Aultman, Venneta Shows, Lula Fairchild, Lessie Tisdale, Retha Rutland and Winnie Knight.

The school closed in 1943 and the students were sent to the Seminary and Sanford schools.

RESOURCES

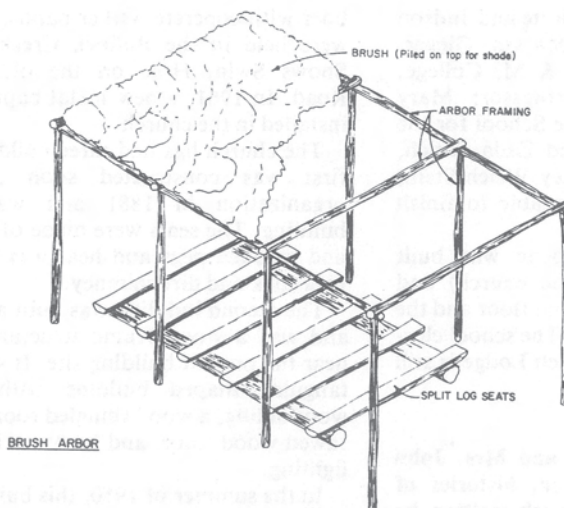
Mr. and Mrs. John Redmon; Broox Sledge; an unknown WPA writer; History of Bethel Baptist Church, written by Wayne Woolwine and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Sanford; Mackie Newton; and Buford Ingram.

BLAKLEY CREEK

This community gets its name from the Blakley Creek that courses south from Smith County into Covington and empties into Okatoma Creek above Collins. A WPA writer in 1938 reported that the creek was named for an early settler in the area.

The Blakley Creek School was founded around 1880 at the site of the present Blakley Creek Baptist Church. The church is located on the Salem Church Road between Salem Baptist Church and Highway 532.

The Blakley Creek Church was organized on October 10, 1896 in the school building. The school building was used for church services from October 10, 1896 until 1926. In 1912 the school was consolidated



Many church groups in this area would build brush arbors in which to meet during the summer months. The leafy branches gave some protection from the hot sun. (Drawing courtesy of the Bethel Baptist Church, first printed in the church's centennial history.)

with other schools to form Smith School, but the church continued to use the school building until the present building was erected in 1926.

RESOURCE

This information is a copy of the minutes of the church organization as recorded by Cooper Hamilton Rutland, who acted as the recording clerk at the organization.

CAPE

The location of Cape is unknown but it is assumed it was close to Kola since the mail from Cape was sent there in 1902. The post office at Cape opened on September 7, 1898, with Patrick M. Rawls as postmaster. He was succeeded by John A. Knight, Henry W. Knight, and Madison L. Speed. The office was closed on August 30, 1907.

RESOURCE

Broox Sledge

CARAWAY

Caraway was the last post office established in Covington County. The exact location is uncertain, but it is believed to have been in that section of the county that is now a part of Jefferson Davis County.

The office was established on July 27, 1905, with Vennie Harrelson as the postmaster. The order for the establishment was rescinded on December 7, 1905.

RESOURCE

"The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

CARSON

Carson was located on the Mississippi Central Railroad at what was then the boundry line between Lawrence and Covington Counties. The post office was established there on November 26, 1900 with Hugh A. Laird as the postmaster. On July 2, 1906 a notation in the postal records shows that the office was located in the newly-created Jefferson Davis County.

RESOURCES

A map dated 1900, used courtesy of Mrs. Orland Lott, and "The Post Office History of Covington County" by Broox Sledge.

CLEM

The post office of Clem was located in Covington County until 1906. Clem is located west of Mount Olive on the Bowie Creek. The postmasters at the location were as follows:

Daniel C. McInnis, Aug. 8, 1898 to Nov. 14, 1901; William W. Toler, Nov. 14, 1901 to June 20, 1902; William H. Thompson, June 20, 1902 to July 2, 1906.

Notation dated July 2, 1906 — "Now in Jefferson Davis."

RESOURCES:

A map dated 1900, used by courtesy of Mrs. Orland Lott, and "The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

COLD SPRINGS COMMUNITY

Yes, there really is a cold spring located in the Cold Springs Community. The community, situated south of Collins, is roughly bordered on the west by Highway 49 and on the North by Highway 84. Recently, a portion of the area was annexed into the city of Collins.

Cold Springs was established as a settlement in 1896 by F. P. Bishop who operated a country store where the present Cold Springs Baptist Church pastorium is located. Bishop came to the area in 1896 from Jasper County and named the community after the springs. His country store was a place for the folk to gather, not only for their farm and household needs, but also for the latest news of the settlement.

COLD SPRINGS SCHOOL

The springs, located on a hill behind Cold Springs Baptist Church, furnished drinking water for a country school, which was built in 1909 and furnished it later for the church. A gourd dipper was used for drinking.

Colonel W. C. Wood, who owned and operated a large lumber company, gave 4,100 acres of land to the county public schools and Cold Springs was one of the settlements to get a school. It was located on the hill behind the present Cold Springs Church. Apple crates with boards across them were used as benches in the school. The building had no locks for the doors, so the doors were often left open and goats would roam freely through the school house. This accounts for the loss of the early minutes of the church (which later met in the school). The minutes were eaten by the goats. Many times before school could begin in the mornings, the goat droppings would have to be swept out.

Some of the teachers who taught in the Cold Springs School were Willie Shoemake, Bob Cole, Della Tullos, Renie Daughtrey, Calvin Daughtrey, Carrie McDonald, Nellie Grantham, Madeline Ellis, Elva Strebeck, Carrie Jones, and Fannie Matheny.

The school closed, and the building was removed in the 1940s.

COLD SPRINGS CHURCH

Through the years, the Cold Springs Church has been an important part of the community. Credit is given Alford Grantham for getting the church started. His family moved to the community in the early 1900s. They lived in the Calvin Daughtrey home and farmed the land. Twin boys in the family were named Albert and Alford. Their older brother was a Baptist preacher and it was through his influence that the brothers were saved and baptized at Collins Baptist Church.

In the fall of 1912, Albert and Alford were in the sugar cane patch stripping cane to be made into syrup when Alford had a vision of a need for a church in the community. He left his job that afternoon and went to the F. P. Bishop home to discuss the possibility with him. The two agreed that afternoon to order some Sunday school literature and to ask for permission from Colonel W. C. Wood to meet in the school house. Wood said yes, if they would let any preacher from any faith preach at the services.

It is generally believed that Archie T. Abercrombie was the first to preach. He and his family lived about a mile from the school. In 1918, Bro. B. A. Ashworth became pastor. It was during Bro. Ashworth's term as pastor that the following incident took place during a severe drought.

R. S. Upton from Salem was a preacher and he was reported as saying that more prayers were answered at Cold Springs than anywhere, so he wanted to hold a prayer meeting there to pray for rain. He rode his horse to all the homes to tell people to come to the church to pray for rain. One particular family walked to and from church that night. When they first started home from the prayer meeting the sky was clear, but before they reached home a little patch of cloud had turned into a

downpour. The father took the baby and told the others to run so they wouldn't get wet. The mother said when the father and baby got home they looked like soaked rag dolls.

In 1922 after the Kola Mill closed, the church bought the commissary to use to build a church building. The commissary cost \$74.00 and Bro. Joe Lott and Jody Shores each gave \$32.00 toward buying it. The land was donated by F. P. Bishop and A. J. Shoemake. The church has undergone several building programs during the years, but all the additions have been added around the original one room.

Pastors of the church have been Archie Abercrombie, T. D. Dale, R. S. Upton, B. B. Lott, Alex Newton, Sr., B. A. Ashworth, J. A. Claunch, J. E. Cranford, H. L. Davis, Alex Abercrombie, R. S. Magee, Billy Ingram, Chester Roberts, Sam Creel, James McCall, Gaylord Snitker, Marvin Taylor, Gilbert H. Wendt, and Russell C. Harris, and Brian Ivy.

During the early years in the one room church, kerosene lamps were used for lighting. Later, a carbide lighting system was installed at the rear of the church. A tank had to be filled with carbide often, and a small tank of water placed so that water could drip into the carbide and cause it to give off gas to be burned in the chandeliers.



The first church building was erected by the Cold Springs Baptist congregation in 1922, using materials from the Kola Mill Commissary that had been dismantled. The white portion of the building was the original structure. The brick section at the front was added when Chester Roberts was pastor, between 1954 and 1960. The later section contained a fellowship hall, kitchen, Sunday school rooms and the first nursery. (Photo courtesy of Mary Nell Padgett.)

The next progressive move toward lighting was the purchase of Coleman lamps which burned kerosene. At last during the 1930s, the Rural Electric Power Association was formed and the church was able to get electricity. Natural gas soon followed to heat the building.

Adjoining the church grounds is the church cemetery, which for many years was surrounded by the black fence that once graced the Covington County Courthouse in Collins. When the decision was made to remove the fence from around the courthouse, Mrs. Minnie McLemore suggested that the church ask to be allowed to buy the fence. It was removed from the cemetery in 1975 and different church families received parts of it. Bunyon Bullock was the first to be buried in the cemetery.

Today the town of Collins is growing toward the Cold Springs area and the community resembles a suburb more than the rural area of its beginnings. The springs are still there, but the location of a gravel pit has covered them somewhat.

RESOURCES

A history of Cold Springs Church written by Gertrude Smith (Mrs. Percy) in 1977 and additional information on the last few years was also provided by Mrs. Smith.



The Cold Springs School was built in 1909 with the help of Colonel W. C. Wood. Col. Wood owned and ran a large lumber company in Covington County, and he donated 4,100 acres of land to the school system. There were no locks on the doors of this school, and occasionally goats would have to be shooed out before school could start. The building was also used as the first meeting place of the Cold Springs Baptist Church in 1912. This photo is believed to be of members of the church. (Photo courtesy of Gertrude Smith)

CURVY CREEK

(Possibly Currie or Curry Creek)

The United States postal records show a post office at Curvy Creek that opened on August 19, 1879, with Phillip H. Napier as the postmaster. Local maps do not show a Curvy Creek, but there is a Currie or Curry Creek that heads in range fourteen and flows southward into the Okatoma Creek near Pickering. (Pickering was near the railroad track, south of Seminary.)

The post office closed on May 23, 1882, with W. W. Self as the last postmaster. Postal records show that the mail was then sent to Williamsburg.

RESOURCES

"The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge; Bob Hamill; and V. O. Campbell.

DEEN

Deen was located due west of Seminary in what is now Jefferson Davis County. It was also west of the Bowie River. The only information available is that it had a post office.

Postmasters were Robert E. Deen, February 8, 1882 to January 2, 1896; Jessie B. Deen, January 2, 1896 to October 2, 1897; Warren N. King, October 2, 1897 to November 28, 1898; Daniel N. McLain, November 28, 1898 to July 12, 1904; Jefferson M. King, July 12, 1904 to July 2, 1906.

A notation dated July 2, 1906 reads, "Now in Jeff Davis County."

RESOURCES

A map dated 1900, used courtesy of Mrs. Orland Lott, and "The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

DRY CREEK (Lone Star)

The Dry Creek Community is fairly well defined by the boundaries of the Dry Creek Watershed. Dry Creek, a tributary of Bowie Creek, drains the area from Jaynesville, where the county lines of Simpson, Covington and Jefferson Davis counties meet, to the Bowie Creek, just below what is today called Lone Star.

These fertile farmlands were a strong enticement for early settlers. However, because of the low lie of the land there was flooding during some times of the year the

creek would then completely dry out (thus the name Dry Creek) in the dry seasons.

The early settlers, not to be deprived of their fertile lands, decided to dig a ditch about seven miles long, thus causing the stream to course through their lands and ensure good drainage. The ditch was from Jaynesville to Mt. Carmel. A WPA writing by Maggie Pittman, in the late 1930s, says that the ditch was dug under the leadership of Bill Rutledge.

Connected with the digging of the ditch is a romance that centers on one of the Irish ditch diggers. Mrs. Pittman gives his name only as Pat.

Pat was hired by a wealthy farmer to help dig the ditch, but he resented the treatment he received. He was made to sleep in "the servants' quarters and was not allowed to dine with the family." He declared that "By the gods, I'll be a rich man and I'll marry his (the farmer's) daughter." His resolution was taken as a joke by all, except Pat.

He continued to work on the ditch and saved every dollar he could. When the ditch was completed he took his savings and began to deal in cotton. His dealings paid off and "he grew wealthy beyond his dreams." To make the story complete, "he married the daughter of the man who had held him as a servant."

LIFE STYLE IN THE EARLY DAYS OF DRY CREEK

Rev. Claiborne McDonald was born in the Dry Creek Community in 1836. In his latter years (about 1900) he wrote an autobiographical paper entitled, "Covington County, In the Long Ago." His story gives us a good picture of life for those early settlers. Rev. McDonald states that his "aim is to be correct and to preserve for history some things that might not go in print except for my pen."

The deer were plentiful in the early days. The country was thinly settled and there were not so many hunters and little tendencies to kill them for market or merely for the hides and hams.

The "black tongue" thinned them out (the deer) in 1858, it would be hard for the people now to believe the great numbers of deer in all directions.

From where Mount Olive now is to Sandy McDonald's on Little Dry Creek, you would pass only one residence in a distance of eight miles, and from Williamsburg to McNair's water mill, thirteen miles, you would pass only two residences.

Dry Creek land was choice for farming, and the very best acres would make a bale of cotton to the acre in favorable years. It was readily broken with one horse and easily cultivated.

Some of the farmers had such prosperity and so many new folk moved in that several families moved out. In these, the county lost some of our most prominent of the very early settlers.

(The settlers that Rev. McDonald listed as moving were the families of Judge Dan McLaurin, Col. Duncan McLaurin, Ives McAfee, and Wm. Flowers.)

SYRUP MAKING

Rev McDonald mentioned that some of the crops were corn and sugar cane. He recalled that these were the "good old days of hog and hominy." He tells about early syrup making, "As well as I can locate the time, 65 years ago (about 1835) Mr. Wm. McDonald, who lived six miles from Williamsburg bought four hundred stalks of sugar cane from Done McGilvray in Perry County, a distance of fifty miles. The McGilvrays who lived near Augusta had been raising it for years.

"The cane was mashed by wooden rollers, and the juice boiled in wash pots or kettles, such as happened to be at command. The molasses was not such as we make now with improved machinery, but it answered a purpose and was the beginning of a fine industry for our country. The farmers now who does not plant a patch of cane must be out of date."



This painting is of the home of Dr. J. D. Terrell that once was in the Dry Creek Community. Dr. Terrell was a native of Covington County, educated in the county schools and practiced medicine here until his death in 1905. The small building on the left was Dr. Terrell's office. (Photo courtesy of Irene Dickinson)

SOME LAWYERS OF THE DAY

Rev. McDonald recalls that "largely the legal practice was done in our county by lawyers from Monticello, that is Judge Vanison and Col. McMillan." He "recollected a very young, handsome, bright, alert district attorney, H. H. Johnson." Johnson later became a Methodist preacher and President of Whitworth College at Brookhaven.

He also recalled a teacher and lawyer, John McNair, of Williamsburg, who was circuit judge for 25 years before the Civil War. Rev. McDonald describes him as "a profound lawyer of mild temperament and fine moral character."

McNair married Addie Watts of Williamsburg and Rev. McDonald states that, "their six sons and two daughters have filled a large part in the history of the state." Judge McNair moved to Brookhaven in 1870 where he became mayor of the town.

REV. McDONALD RECALLS TWO RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Rev. McDonald tells the story of Capt. Toler, a Baptist military chaplain. "He was somewhat advance in life, but he was earnest, and highly esteemed in the ministry. I heard this anecdote on his work: On one occasion, he had a man to immerse (baptize) who was more bulky than any he

had led into the limpid stream, so when the man's back struck the bottom he wasn't all under. As Capt. Toler was a highly practical man, he rolled his subject until all claims of orthodoxy were met."

He also tells about Rev. John Martin who lived in Smith County, but who had part of his work in Covington County.

"He was a plain man and a real character. I heard this of him: Dr. Newton, a new School Presbyterian minister, was on his way to the Gulf Coast for recreation, he called up at a good farmer's residence on Saturday afternoon and asked for a stay until Monday morning as he did not wish to travel on Sunday.

He asked if there was to be preaching on Sunday, or could he hold service somewhere. He was told that Mr. Martin was to hold service near by. So he went and as the pastor was not present they kindly asked him to preach, which he did after getting a promise from the members to let him know when the pastor came in as he would not occupy a minister's pulpit without his consent.

The pastor came and politely bid him finish, which he did. It was a sermon of rare eloquence, and to the delight and edification of all present. Mr. Martin closed, pulling up his sleeves and saying: "Usually in eating we have the pies and fine dishes last but you have those first and now I will give you the bacon and collards."

TERRELL FAMILY HISTORY

Another early family in the Dry Creek area was that of John Terrell. He came to Covington County from Georgia in 1818 and moved to a farm on Bowie River, just southeast of Lone Star in what is now a part of Jefferson Davis County. He married Mary Alexander Gilliland, the daughter of Rev. James Gilliland, a Presbyterian preacher who taught school at Mt. Carmel. John and Mary Terrell had ten children and five of these remained in Covington for most of their adult life.

Sam G. Terrell was the fifth child of the couple and he resided all his life in Covington County and was one of the largest and most influential farmers in the area until his death in 1878 at age 49.

A daughter, Adaline Suftin Terrell, married James Monroe White, a prosperous and highly respected merchant in Mt. Carmel.

Vernon La Grange Terrell became a lawyer and was elected to represent Covington County in the Mississippi Legislature. During the Civil War he was an aide on Governor Pettus' staff. Later he was elected Captain of the "Terrell Dragoons" in the Mississippi Calvary.

Daughter, Angeline Melissa Terrell, stayed at the homestead on Bowie during the Civil War and worked to help keep the farm operating. She returned to live out her last days at the farm when her husband James A. Lamkin died.

The youngest child, Jasper Decalb, resided all his life at the old home. He was educated in the county schools, the Zion Seminary and the University of Mississippi.

He was wounded at the Battle of Shiloh in the Civil War, but returned to battle after "the careful nursing of Dr. Frank Brown of Mt. Carmel and his devoted sisters, Adaline and Angeline."

After the war he completed his medical studies in 1870 at Tulane University and continued to practice medicine at his home on the Bowie River until his death on October 30, 1905.

CREEKS IN THE DRY CREEK AREA

In addition to the Dry Creek which flows from Jaynesville to below Lone Star, there are three others creeks that drain the area.

Terrible Creek heads near Mt. Pleasant Church and flows in a southeasterly direction into Bowie. Two of the tributaries that flow into the Terrible are Little Terrible which rises above Mt. Pleasant Church and runs southward into Terrible north of Watson's Mill Pond and McInnis Creek which begins just below the head of Terrible and flows southeastwardly into Terrible, south of Watson's Mill Pond.

The Dry Creek Water Park is located in the northwest part of Covington County and it covers 400 acres. The park, a part of

the Pat Harrison Waterway District, opened on June 24, 1981 and has facilities for swimming, boating, fishing, and camping.

SCHOOLS

Rev. A. R. Graves founded the Dry Creek Academy in the late 1830s or early 1840s. Rev. Graves was born in Saratoga, New York in 1809. He was sent as a Presbyterian missionary to Natchez in 1832. Wanting to find a place where he could teach the children of the less affluent he traveled to Monticello and later to Dry Creek.

Just how long he stayed there is uncertain, but he was urged by members of a church he was serving, Concord Presbyterian, to start the Zion Seminary in 1845 at what is now Seminary.

It seems that he left the Dry Creek Academy in the hands of Professor J. R. Dodge. The exact location of the academy is unknown, but it is thought to have been in a few mile radius of the present Sleigo Presbyterian Church at Lone Star.

Other schools in the area as recalled by Mrs. Claude Loftin are Terrell School (located near the home of Dr. J. D. Terrell); Black Jack (near the Pleasant Grove Methodist Church); Chapel School (near the present New Chapel Pentacostal Church); Friendship (near the present Friendship Baptist Church); Oakvale (north of Lone Star); Magee School (south of Lone Star on the east side of the Bowie), and Powell (about five miles from Lone Star going toward Mount Olive).

LONE STAR SCHOOL

The Lone Star School began about 1927 and was a consolidation of the smaller schools of Chapel, Powell and Magee and

Black Jack. The first year the schools meet in the Black Jack School building (where Lone Star Baptist Church is now located), but new buildings were built for use the next year, at the same location. Two of the earliest principals were B. Zeno Herrington and F. S. Hammon.

Mrs. Garland Calhoun, a student there, recalls that Principal Herrington asked the students what they would like to name the newly consolidated school and they suggested Lone Star. The highway that went through the area east to west was the Lone Star Highway and the children had been told that the highway went all the way to the Lone Star state of Texas. Ennis Crawford was the first principal of the new Lone Star School.

The school was closed in 1957 with Denzil Saulters as the last principal. The teachers that last year were Robert Ashley, Roma Hatten, Floyd Wood, Juanita Lott, Mrs. Jesse Jordan, Hobson Toney and Mrs. G. Roderick.

CHURCHES

SLEIGO (DRY CREEK) PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Sleigo Church was organized on July 10, 1852, with the help of Rev. A. R. Graves who was then the head of the Zion Seminary as well as the pastor of several area churches, including the Hopewell Presbyterian Church at Jaynesville.

The first meeting place seems to have been the Dry Creek Academy building with Rev. John C. Baldwin as the first pastor and the following as charter members: Roderic Mathison, Elizabeth Mathison, Jane White, Catherine Strickland, Alexander McLeod, Elizabeth McLeod,



This photo was taken at the 100th Anniversary Celebration of Sleigo (Dry Creek) Presbyterian Church on July 20, 1952. Preachers for the day were (left) Rev. Gus Hall, a former pastor, and Rev. Richard Schmoyer.

(Photo courtesy of Mrs. Charles Calhoun)



The occasion for this bountiful "dinner on the ground" was the 100th Anniversary of Sleigo (Dry Creek) Presbyterian Church on July 20, 1952.

(Photo courtesy of Mrs. Charles Calhoun)

William McDonald, Margaret McDonald, Mary McDonald, Catherine McDonald, Elizabeth McDonald, Barbara Stewart, Major Newton, Ellen Newton and Apalona McAfee.

Many of these first members came from the neighboring churches of Hopewell (at Jaynesville) and Center. Soon after the organization, a building was erected about 4/5 miles north of the present location. The second building was constructed by Neil Mathison, the same Mathison that built the two court houses at Williamsburg in 1827 and 1854. The present church building, the third, was dedicated on July 10, 1949.

Charles Calhoun, secretary and treasurer of the church for 30 years has the records for the 133 year history of the church. In the records the church is referred to as both the Dry Creek Presbyterian Church and the Sleigo Presbyterian Church. In recent years Sleigo has been the most used named.

On July 20, 1952 the church celebrated their 100th anniversary with Rev. W. A. Hall, former pastor, as guest preacher. A cake, in the shape of the church, was made for the occasion by Mrs. Jasper McRaney.

PLEASANT GROVE CONGREGATIONAL METHODIST CHURCH

The Pleasant Grove Congregational Methodist Church is located 1 mile south of the Highway 84, a short distance from the Lone Star Baptist Church. The church was organized in 1856 and has informally been called Black Jack through the years. The name came from a lovely grove of Black Jack oak trees that stood nearby.

LONE STAR UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Lone Star United Methodist Church is located adjacent to Sleigo Presbyterian Church on Highway 84 in Lone Star Community. The church was organized in 1940 and is a part of the Williamsburg Charge. There were 28 charter members of the

church and there are now approximately 42 members. The current pastor is Rev. Roe Ballow.

LONE STAR BAPTIST CHURCH

The Lone Star Baptist Church is located on the grounds of the old Lone Star School and the church was constituted and dedicated on December 14, 1975. The members had been meeting since February 1963 as a mission, under the auspices of the Seminary Baptist Church.

The first meetings were held in the old Lone Star School gymnasium, with Rev. M. L. Faler as the first pastor. Members of the Seminary congregation would weekly bring a piano on a pickup to be used in the services.

The gymnasium gradually became inadequate and beyond repairs and a sanctuary was built. It was dedicated on March 16, 1969. The gymnasium had to be removed and the area is now a parking lot.

The church has continued to improve their building and in 1984 they also added a pastorium to the church property. The members are faithful to the church and in 1984 the church was third in baptisms in the state among churches with memberships under 100. 34 were baptized that year.

Pastors of the mission and the church have been M. L. Faler, Rudolph Sims, Tommy Walker, Dwight Geist, Danny Flora, Oral Patterson, Randy Whitlock, and Fred Morris, Jr. The deacons in the church are Tommy Burnham, Dan Easterling, William A. Graves, Cecil Easterling, Karl McRaney, and Philip Miller.

POST OFFICES IN THE DRY CREEK AREA

There have been six post offices in the Dry Creek area, the first being called **Dry Creek** and being established on November 16, 1844 with Joseph McAfee as postmaster. Other postmasters to follow were Duncan McLaurin, July 12, 1852 to December 31, 1852; A. C. Powell,

December 31, 1852 to August 15, 1853; Daniel McLaurin, August 5, 1853 to September 7, 1860; and Hardy Pittman, September 7, 1860 to January 21, 1867.

The office was closed on January 21, 1867. Another office was formed in 1900 named **Tax**, which had its name changed in 1902 to Dry Creek. Tax had one postmaster, Carley Kelley, who served from October 8, 1900 to September 15, 1902.

The name was changed to Dry Creek on September 15, 1902 and Willey Kelley was the postmaster until March 11, 1908. He was followed by Walter W. McRaney, who declined the appointment and by John A. Kelley, who also declined appointment on May 4, 1908. The office was closed on June 30, 1908, with the mail going to Collins.

Deen was then a part of Covington County, about halfway between the Bowie Creek and Santee. The postmasters at Deen were Robert E. Deen, February 8, 1882 to January 2, 1896; Jesse B. Deen, January 2, 1896 to October 2, 1897; Warren N. King, October 2, 1897 to November 28, 1898; Daniel N. McLain, November 28, 1898 to July 12, 1904; and Jefferson M. King, July 12, 1904 to July 2, 1906. The postal records note that the office is "Now in Jefferson Davis County."

Gramby (now in Jefferson Davis County) had a post office for a short time, August 12, 1900 to April 14, 1901 with Robert E. Holloway as postmaster. The mail was sent to Terrell when the office closed. (Terrell was the home of Dr. J. D. Terrell near the Bowie Creek.)

The exact location of the postoffice, **Extra**, is unknown, but it had one postmaster, Rachael Magee from September 26, 1904 to June 24, 1905. At that time the name was changed to **Vex**. Oral tradition tells us that the postmaster became vexed when the residents began to subscribe to newspapers and magazines, making the mail more laborious to handle. Rachael A. Magee was the postmaster at Vex from June 24, 1905 to December 15, 1907, when the mail was sent to Collins.

RESOURCES

"Covington County in the Long Ago" by Rev. Claiborne McDonald; "History of the Terrell Family," author unknown; Minnie McDonald; Irene Dickinson; the WPA writings of Mrs. D. W. Giles; *A History of Seminary, Mississippi* by Jerry Windsor; "The Post Office History of Covington County" by Broox Sledge; "Lone Star Church History," author unknown; Cecil Easterling; the church records of Sleigo Presbyterian Church; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Calhoun; Dale Jordan; Mrs. Jesse (Isabel) Jordan; Mrs. Garland Calhoun; Mrs. Claude Loftin; Mrs. M. L. Smith; and Tammy Lynn Eubanks.

EMINENCE

The community of Eminence in the east central part of Covington County, about halfway between Collins and the Jones County Line on Highway 588, is reputed to have been named because of the elevation of the land. The earliest settlers came to the area in 1866; reportedly, because the "Civil War" had caused them considerable loss of money and property and they were looking for a place to begin their lives again. The following account of the Eminence Community is based on an informal history written by John Redmon, resident of the community.

EMINENCE SCHOOL

As was the custom of the early settlers in Covington County, they first set out to establish a school and a church. The Eminence School was located on the W. G. Williams farm about one-half mile north of the present Eminence United Methodist Church Cemetery. The date of its beginning is unknown. The school was later moved one mile east on Highway 588 to the Jack Cranford farm. It remained there until 1924 when it was brought to the site where the Eminence United Methodist Church stands today.

This building burned in 1938 and was replaced soon afterwards. The school was consolidated with Seminary about 1943 or 1944.

EMINENCE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Eminence United Methodist Church was founded, more than likely, in the late 1800s. The exact date is unknown, but the oldest grave in the adjoining cemetery is the grave of William Cranford, dated April 3, 1885. The land for the church and cemetery was part of the Jerry Cranford farm and is located in the southeast corner of section 32-8-14.

The first church building was an unpainted rough lumber structure that stood between the cemetery and Highway 535. In the late 1920s it was torn down and a new one was erected just across the highway to the east.

When the Eminence school closed in 1944, the land and building reverted to the owner of the Cranford farm, who was at that time Mrs. Fannie Graham. She sold the farm and buildings to W. A. Williams, who in turn traded the school building to the church for the old church building and one thousand dollars in cash. The old school building was then converted into the present church building. There have been several stages of rebuilding to arrive at the church building's present state.

Some of the early leaders of the church were the Kellys, Leggetts, Williams, Napiers, Cranfords, Redmons, Kervins, Adcocks, Tatums, Taylors, and Huffs.



This photo, taken about 1907 or 1908, is of the log train engine and loader of the Mason Lumber Company. Those who can be identified in the picture are Pete Redmon (second from right standing on the back row) and Fred Mooney, the water boy, (standing to the right of Redmon). The steam engine was a "Shay" and was lovingly referred to as "Old Misery." The company had another engine called "The Climax." It was a Rod Engine Tyke and was used to carry the logs to the mill. The Shay was used to spot and load the cars and get them on the main line so the other engine could carry them to the mill. (Photo courtesy of John Redmon.)

Many of the descendants of these early settlers still live in the area, with one notable exception. The Kelly Road from Eminence to Highway 590 does not have a Kelly living on it, although some Kellys still

own property there. The George Kelly homestead cabin built in 1897, has been restored by Rebecca Kelly Doley and it is used for ceremonial occasions when they come "home" from Houston, Texas.

An incomplete listing of the pastors of the Eminence Church are Rev. Howse, Rev. J. L. Jolley, Rev. Downes, Rev. Moody, Rev. Westbrooks, Rev. Thompson Guice, Rev. Corley, Rev. Allums, Rev. Cooper, Rev. Coleman, Rev. Herrington Leggett, Rev. Hix, Rev. Wilson Cameron, Rev. Sigler, Rev. Landrum, Rev. Rice McRaney, Rev. Lipps, Rev. Williams, Rev. Lefler, Rev. Hartfield, Rev. Weeks Baggett, Rev. Vollman, Rev. Lott, Rev. Myers, Rev. Simpson, Rev. Norman Foxx and Rev. Bill Waugh.

LOGGING CAMP

About the turn of the century, there was a logging camp just across the road from the present Eminence Church. Mason Lumber Co. of Gandisi had a railroad that crossed the present church yard. The "Camp Cars" were just east of the church and south of the Redmon Cemetery. This camp and the railroad were removed in 1908, but traces of the dummy lines are still visible and railroad spikes are found even today in yards and gardens. (A dummy line



John Redmon of Eminence is "retired," but continues to enjoy searching for Indian relics and inventing novelties such as this "kicking machine." Redmon contends that when you need a "swift kick in the pants" his machine is always ready. (Photo by Gwen Hitt)

was a railroad line built from the main line to the point where the timber was being cut.)

In 1917 E. F. Guthrie built a sawmill and grist mill on the Redmon place and the Redmon family ran it for him for several years. John Redmon recalls that his early jobs were "doodling sawdust" and hauling wood to burn in the boiler furnace to make steam to power the mill. Old railroad crossties were also burned for fuel.

The two oxen that pulled the wagon to haul logs and firewood for the mill were named Bob and Red.

KATIE POST OFFICE

Katie post office was located in the Charles Cranford store building in Eminence near the Redmon Cemetery. The postmasters that served were as follows: Jeremiah L. Crawford, March 7, 1900 to December 9, 1901; George W. Ellzey, December 9, 1901 to December 14, 1903; Jeremiah L. Crawford, December 14, 1903 to February 3, 1904; Sarah E. Welch, February 3, 1904 to December 9, 1904; George W. Ellzey, December 9, 1901 to March 7, 1904; Sarah E. Wedgeworth, March 7, 1904 to January 20, 1905; and John R. Patrick, January 20, 1905 to April 15, 1905.

The office was closed on April 15, 1905 with the mail being sent to Dont.

RESOURCES

Mr. and Mrs. John Redmon and "The Post Office History of Covington County" by Broox Sledge.

EVERGREEN

The Evergreen Community generally surrounds the Evergreen Baptist Church which is located about 2½ miles north of Seminary just off of the Willow Grove Church Road.

The Evergreen Baptist Church was organized in 1933 and was an "arm" of the Liberty Baptist Church. The organizing members were Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Bucklew, Mr. and Mrs. B. C. Clark, Mr. and Mrs. J. Arthur Clark, Mr. and Mrs. Allen Graves, Miss Ruby May Graves, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Hill, and Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Sellers. The first pastor was Van B. Hill.

Before the organization of the church Sunday School was held regularly in the home of Mr. and Mrs. B. C. Clark. After the organization, Mr. Clark donated two small building which were dismantled and used to erect the first church building.

The name "Evergreen" was suggested by J. Arthur Clark. Mr. Clark's family had come to this area from Wayne County and they were associated with a church by that

name in Wayne County. The name "Okatoma" was also suggested by one of the organizers of the church, S. A. Shoemake. Mr. Shoemake's great grandson, Glenn Shoemake is the present pastor of the church.

In the early years of the church when "preaching" was half-time, services were held on Saturday and Sunday mornings the two weekends the pastor was there.

In 1942 the congregation saw a need to build another building. They purchased the Bethel School building and it was torn down and the materials were used to build the present Evergreen Church. Since 1942 there have been several enlargements and renovations to the building.

There are approximately 150 active members in the church now.

RESOURCES

Queenie Clark, Eva Clark, Earl Clark, and Glenn Shoemake.

GANDSI

Gandsi, located north of Seminary, was established as a flag station of the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad in 1897. Its name came from an abbreviation of the railroad company—G and SI. The station was discontinued shortly after a station was formed at Seminary, and Gandsi soon became extinct.

Jim Kelly, former postmaster at Moscos, was one of the first to settle at Gandsi. He was the postmaster when there was a post office there: April 8, 1905 to July 30, 1910. He was also a general merchant in the town. In the early part of the 1900s, the town boasted a sawmill, several stores, a church and a school. Some of the promi-

nent citizens were from the families of Napier, Shoemake, Leggett, and Watkins.

Gandsi is currently a residential area and the location of the International Paper Pulpwood Yard. There are five regular employees at the yard, with Tom Reynolds as wood yard clerk.

RESOURCES

The History of Seminary, Mississippi by Jerry Windsor, Mayor Lawrence Hemeter, Dwan Swilley, and the WPA writings of an unknown writer.

GILMER

The community of Gilmer is located four miles northwest of Hot Coffee on the Hot Coffee-to-Mize Road. It is almost on the Covington and Smith county line. John McLeod settled there in 1872 and named the place for Gilmer, Texas. Other early families in the area were the Mayfields and Duckworths.

At one time, there were a school and two churches at Gilmer. The school was located where Brenda and Billy Yelverton now live; the teacher's home was across from Ray Corley's home. The Gilmer Baptist and Gilmer Methodist churches were located adjacent to each other, close to where Rose and Jimmy Gentry now live.

There was a post office at Gilmer between 1901 and 1907. The postmasters were George C. Mayfield, April 18, 1901 to September 2, 1903 and Elizabeth J. McLeod, September 2, 1903 to January 31, 1907. The mail service was discontinued on January 31, 1907, and the mail was sent to Mount Olive.

All signs of the school and the churches have vanished; the school closed in 1932.



This class photo was of the younger students at Gilmer School. The only one who has been identified on the photo is the teacher, Fannie Welch. Miss Welch is on the extreme left on the back row. The date of the photo is unknown. The Gilmer School closed in 1932. (Photo courtesy of Lucille Rogers Skehan.)

The nearest church today is the New Liberty Baptist Church near the Smith and Covington County line. The Gilmer voting precinct is located on the Ray Corley farm.

Most of the area residents are poultry and cattle farmers, although Jimmy and Keith Carter do have one of the few cotton growing operations in the county.

RESOURCES

A History of Seminary, Mississippi by Jerry Windsor; Ray Corley; and Maxine Williamson.

HOPEWELL

The Hopewell Community in northeast Covington County, as one of the oldest settlements in the county, has long exemplified the Old Testament meaning of the word "hope." "Hope" in the days of Abraham and Moses meant to "trust, expect, await, and endure." Those early Hopewell settlers came to a wilderness that had no towns, no roads, no churches and no schools, yet they endured.

The first person to purchase land in the area was believed to be Thomas Ates. Among the first to homestead there were Ben and Mary Duckworth. On November 25, 1825 they received a patent for 160 acres at approximately the present location of Old Hopewell Church and Hopewell Elementary School.

It is possible the Duckworths were the ones to give the name Hopewell to the community. On February 15, 1834, they joined the Leaf River Baptist Church transferring their church membership from Hopewell, South Carolina.

Other early settlers in the general area were the William Speed family. They came from the Pendleton District of South Carolina in 1825 enroute to Texas. Tradition tells us that while camping, in what is now the Hopewell Community, their oxen were poisoned by eating poison ivy. One of the Speed men and a slave returned to South Carolina to replace the oxen and some other stock that had been lost on the trip.

It would appear that the others waited in Covington County and upon the duo's return a decision was made to end the trip.

They purchased land from Thomas Ates that also included a log cabin. The cabin still exists today. The Speeds reared nine children there. They added to the log house, dug wells, and built smoke houses, sheep pens, blacksmith shops and barns. A cemetery is located nearby where the slaves were buried. Tradition tells us that Gov. William McWillie (Mississippi's Governor from 1857-1859) stopped overnight at the Speed farm while enroute to Ellisville. He was traveling in a survey with a fine span of

horses. On his return trip he is said to have brought a pair of red Moroccan shoes to the four-year-old daughter, Keziah.

When Keziah married William F. Spell after the Civil War, they also lived in the Speed house. Soon after their marriage, Mrs. Spell visited her sister, Elizabeth Speed Rawls Wood, in the southern part of the county. She brought back home with her a small pecan tree seedling. The seedling grew into a magnificent tree and each fall Mrs. Spell would gather enough pecans to pay the taxes on their land. The tree continues to bear pecans today.

LIFE IN THE HOPEWELL COMMUNITY AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

It is generally agreed that when the slaves were freed in 1865, many continued to farm and eventually to buy farms in the same area where they lived. In a February 1985 article in the *Hattiesburg American*, Mrs. Mary Jane Breland, a native of Hopewell, was interviewed on the occasion of her 101st birthday.

The following is an account of life as Mrs. Breland remembers it:

"Born February 15, 1884 'on Nigger Ridge northeast of Collins in Covington County (nobody was living there except us colored folks),' Mary Jane was the seventh of 12 children of Thomas and Jane Booth.

"Booth was a farmer who owned his own land. His children grew up farming and respecting the land which not too many years earlier had belonged only to white men.

"We raised cotton, corn, peas, potatoes, rice, sugar cane—everything that could be raised, we tried some of it. People didn't buy much back then," recalls Mrs. Breland.

"The girls worked right alongside the

boys. 'We just used to farm and play. That's all I knew. I worked in the fields, split rails, dipped turpentine. . . Everything a man could do, I'd do it.'

"If life was hard, she didn't notice. 'It didn't seem hard to me because I didn't know nothin' else,' Mrs. Breland says.

"Thomas and Jane Booth also saw to it that the farm work didn't interfere with their children's schooling. Mary Jane, along with her seven sisters and four brothers, went to school at Old Hopewell School."

Mrs. Breland now lives near Brooklyn, Mississippi, with her daughter.

OLD HOPEWELL CHURCH

The Old Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church was founded about 1864 or 1865 under a brush arbor at approximately the present location. Some of the early founders of the church were Elder Jones, Elder George Barnes, Bro. Wylie Owens, Bro. Jeff Paige and Bro. Oscar Lucas.

The building first used by the church was a log cabin, followed in a few years by a small frame building. The present building was built in 1957.

Pastors who have served the church and the dates they began are Elder Jones (1864), Elder George Barnes (late 1800s), Elder George W. Booth (1909), Rev. R. G. Gray (1914), Rev. E. D. Barnes (1941), Rev. H. L. McKnight (1950), Rev. G. G. Booth (1977), and Rev. Johnny McInnis (1981).

Mrs. Ruby Huff Jordan, writing for the WPA in the late 30s describes a visit to the Hopewell Church. "This very modern structure is well equipped. Some of the members to be seen worshipping are Frank Bryant, land owner, Joe and George Booth, businessmen and W. A. Lucas,



Old Hopewell Baptist Church was founded in 1864 or 1865 at approximately the same location as the present church, (above) built in 1957. The church sits adjacent to the Hopewell Elementary School. (Photo by Gwen Hitt.)

store owner. When the tall minister has finished with the sermon you will find the members shaking hands, exchanging greetings and the younger ones courting. This will go on for several hours.

"On each second Sunday in June an all day program known as Children's Day is held. The spiritual songs, the speeches of the children and the summer attire, usually white, is a sight to behold. (This Children's Day still continues.)

"On the fourth Sunday in August another annual event begins, the Big Meeting (revival). The following week the applicants are baptized at a place in Oakwoods (Oakey Woods) Creek near Mom Booth's home."

Many changes have come about during the more than one-hundred-year-history of the church. Some of the highlights follow.

- Bro. George Booth, Jr. was elected secretary of the church on April 26, 1913. He served in this capacity until 1961.

- The first trustees of the church were elected in 1916. They were Bro. Oscar Lucas, Bro. Frank Sullivan, Bro. William Hicks, Bro. J. B. Booth and Bro. B. B. Hicks.

- Also in 1916 the first mission group of women was named. They were Sister Minervia Barnes, Sister Mollie Lucas, Sister Amanda Booth, Sister Moriah Jones and Sister Peggy Bryant.

- The first "mother" of the church was elected in 1916. The responsibility of Sister Mahalia Hicks was to instruct the young wives and mothers of the church.

- In 1927 a revival was held with Rev. Overstreet preaching. This was the first revival since 1913.

- In 1932 Bro. Van Milsay was designated to deal with delinquent members.

- Rev. G. G. Booth was ordained as a minister in 1937.

- Mrs. Marie Barnes Feazell was elected as the first church musician (pianist) in May 1941.

- During 1982-1985 many renovations have been made to the church building including reupholstering the seats and purchasing new furniture. The church cemetery has been improved and land purchased to enlarge it. The current membership is approximately 300.

Old Hopewell is referred to by many as the "mother church" since many of its members have been instrumental in organizing several other churches in the area. These include Shady Oak Church, Providence Church, Jones Chapel Church and the New Hopewell Church.

HOPEWELL SCHOOL

The beginning date of Hopewell School is unknown, but most agree the school probably started between 1870 and 1890. Most likely it met in the church until a small



Times have changed since this building was used to make caskets for the citizens of the Hopewell community. The abandoned building is located behind the Old Hopewell Baptist Church (organized in 1865) and adjacent to the church cemetery. (Photo by Gwen Hitt)

building could be built. The school year in most small schools of the time was for only a few months and this was generally when there was no field work to do.

In the 1920s a new frame structure was built with money provided by the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Ronsenwald, from 1909 to 1924, President of Sears, donated over \$63 million to black education as well as establishing the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.

This new building seems to have given impetus to education in the area. Former students report there were classes in Latin, shorthand, music, agriculture, math, and science. At one point there seems to have been a small band.

There was also a strong 4-H Club that met during the school day. Annie Barron, Negro Home Demonstration Agent during the late 40s and early 50s, reports there were several state and national winners among the 4-H'ers. Some of these were Lily Ruth Beasley, Mattie McCann, Annie McCann, Lillian Booth, Jessie Anderson, Annie B. Barron and Eva Flowers. (All of these were from Covington County, although not all were from Hopewell School.)

There was strong emphasis placed on vocational training with classes in canning, dairying, agriculture, black-smithing and sewing. There was a cannery on the grounds where night classes were held in cooking. Members of the community could also come there to can any of the meat or produce from their farms. Mrs. Carlee L. Owens was an outstanding vocational teacher there.

A WPA writer, Anselm J. Finch, in the

late 1930s describes the citizens of Hopewell as "thrifty and industrious." He related that many of the farm families were almost self-sufficient with full smoke houses and pantries lined with canned fruits and vegetables.

He described the community as following the precept of Booker T. Washington, "We shall prosper in proportion as we learn to glorify and dignify labor and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life."

The vocational classes for adults at the school were intensified after the war in the 40s when special classes were held for veterans.

Many of the graduates of Hopewell went on to college. The children of Lora Jane Lucas and Elmer Barnes are an example of a family that knew the importance of education. All nine of their children attended Hopewell School and all nine obtained degrees from Jackson State University. Seven of the children received master's degrees and two obtained doctorates.

Ruth Barnes McCain, the second daughter of the family, says that until she was in the tenth grade the children walked three miles to school. Mrs. McCain is now a teacher at Hopewell. Her brothers and sisters are scattered throughout the nation from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., but they and their offspring have a reunion every four years to reminisce.

The last high school class to graduate from Hopewell was in 1956. In 1957 grades 1-8 were housed in a new building, the present building. In 1970 grades 7 and 8 moved into Collins and the 306 students today are in grades 1-6. Irvin Keys, a graduate of

the school and a teacher there since 1959, is the current principal.

Other black schools in Covington County in the late 30s were Collins, Williamsburg, Seminary, Lily Rose, New Prospect, New Hopewell, Rocky Valley, Linwood, Shady Oak, Friendship, Warrs, Lux Line and Jones Chapel. B. H. Barron, former principal of Linwood School, later known as Lincoln School, has written a master's thesis on the black schools in Covington County. An article in Section III will give details on these schools.

NORFLEET POST OFFICE

One post office in the general area of Hopewell was Norfleet. The following is an account written by Joe Spell of the post office that served from April 16, 1902 to January 31, 1905. The postmaster was Nora Viola Reddoch Spell.

"Fred Spell, first born to William Spell and Keziah Speed Spell in 1867, built a one pen house of pine poles, 16x24 ft., with a stick and clay chimney added about 1885 or 1888. When Viola Reddoch became of age to marry, he brought her to his cabin to establish a home.

"In 1894 twin children were born named Norfleet and Baxter. Enough people were now living within walking distance to set up a post office. The site was, by some means of reckoning, about half way between Williamsburg and Reddoch Ferry on the Leaf River.

"Fred Spell (Pa, we called him) told me, back before I was of school age in the early 1930s, that a freed man named John Wheeler carried the mail. He usually arrived before sundown. Pa would feed his horse, give him supper and breakfast, and something to eat on the way.



This basketball team represented Hopewell High School in the early 1940s. The names of the players and of the young lady are unidentified. (Photo courtesy of Elva Barnes)



Isom Booth is buried in the cemetery of the Old Hopewell Baptist Church. Booth gave the land on which the church was started in 1865. (Photo by Gwen Hitt)

"I asked Pa if he charged for feed and food and he said, no. It was not heard of to charge for food or feed for work stock.

"Wheeler slept in the cabin with the family during cold weather, and assisted in keeping the fire going.

"The post office was given the name of their girl baby, Norfleet. The equipment was none. A drawer in an oak wash stand was used to store mail when the postman came. Neighbors would send a child (or come themselves) to bring a letter or pick up mail on occasion. If a letter looked important, Ma would 'see passing' and send it to the recipient."

The last part of the house used for this post office was torn down recently when the road was widened.

HOPEWELL TODAY

The circular-shaped ridge remains today as a rural community. There are no stores in the community so the citizens go to Hot Coffee, Collins or Taylorsville to shop. A pride in their school continues and is climaxed each school year by an impressive commencement ceremony for the sixth grade class. The school campus has a new cafeteria where breakfast and lunch are served to the students. Nothing remains of the cannery except a concrete slab.

Hopewell Community has endured through good times and bad. Hope springs eternal.

RESOURCES

Information for this chapter was provided by Ruth McCann; Mamie Booth; Anna Lucas; Rev. Hubbard Booth; Morrell Moffett; the WPA writings of Ruby Huff Jordan and Anslem J. Finch; an article by Sharon Wertz in the *Hattiesburg American* Feb. 17, 1985; Annie Barron; B. H. Barron; James Barnes; Nelda Mitchell; Ella Spell; Joe Spell; Bob Hamill; Irvin Keys; and World Book Encyclopedia, Vol. 16, 1982.

HOT COFFEE

Because of its unusual name, the community of Hot Coffee has had much media attention throughout the years. Articles have appeared in several state-wide newspapers; in the 1960s the *New York Times* published an article; and the weatherman on the NBC "Today" show has mentioned it in his weather report.

Located between Highway 84 East and Mount Olive on Highway 532 the little settlement has recently gotten a sign that denotes its "downtown" area. The first store in the area was opened by E. L. Craft about 1870. This date is uncertain; one source says it may have been as early as 1810. Mr. Craft built a lunch counter to serve the people who traveled the road to market. The people did their marketing either in Mobile or Ellisville, so Craft built his lunch counter on the road that served both towns.

In the late 1800s L. N. Davis opened a store nearby and it was at this location that the first sign in the shape of a coffee pot was erected. This store was situated across the road from the present R. J. Knight General Merchandise store.

Two of the most recent articles on Hot Coffee appeared in the *Hattiesburg American* in March 1984 written by Pam Johnson. The following is reprinted from those articles.

Hattiesburg American articles describe Hot Coffee

HOT COFFEE — "The name of this community is one of those Mississippi curiosities, like Arm or Red Lick, which draw scoffs of disbelief from Yankees and nonchalant acceptance from the natives.

Covington Countians say things like "He's from Hot Coffee," or "That's on the way to Hot Coffee," or even "I live at Hot Coffee," almost every day, without blinking an eye.

It's hard to establish that kind of conversational ease with foreigners. They kind of look at you with glazed-over eyes, twitch once or twice, shake their heads to clear their ears, and ask you, "Now, what did you say?"



Highway signs have been directing visitors to the community of Hot Coffee for more than 60 years, but it was only in June 1985 that the State Highway Department erected signs in the downtown business district. The signs, on state highway 532 flank R. J. Knight's General Store. (Photo by Jimmy Goff)

And you tell them, again. And they run to take pictures just to prove Hot Coffee, Mississippi, exists.

Which it does, in Beat Five.

Back when Ellisville was the primary trading center of south central Mississippi, folks traveled by mule and wagon on two or three-day excursions to bring produce to that teeming village in exchange for currency and hard-to-find staples.

In the late 1800s, an industrious businessman named L. N. Davis saw the need for a stopover for those northbound, travel-weary farmers and their families, and opened a store on what is now Highway 532 in northeastern Covington County.

Because it was his habit to have hot coffee and cake available for his guests, folks began to say "It's just a few more miles until we can get some hot coffee."

Later, the travelers shortened their milestone remarks to "It's just a few more miles to hot coffee."

And so the little stop in the road was christened Hot Coffee and became an entity with its own spot on maps of Covington County. In the early 1920s, it gained the prestige of having its name appear on road signs.

Hot Coffee has no boundaries. Some 1,000 persons claim to live there, according to Mrs. Pernecie Knight, wife of R. J. Knight, proprietor of Hot Coffee proper's main store.

Hot Coffee's claim to fame might well be its name, but for those who travel its roads, that claim could just as easily be its scenery — the hills, hollows, smoky ridges and forests that make the Hot Coffee area a must-see for persons who appreciate the pristine beauty of untouched Southern lushness.

The Leaf River creates a valley to the north of Hot Coffee. It was from the big river's waters that a 198-pound sturgeon was pulled in 1938. According to Knight, fishermen tired of having their lines broken by the unseen monster and so they grouped up, laid a fence in the water and began shooting. Up came the sturgeon and into *Time* magazine and *Field and Stream* went the saga of how farm boy R. J. Knight rolled up his britches legs and captured that all-time fish story.

"It was full of eggs, too," Knight recalls. "And we ate for a long time off that one fish." The mounted evidence of that singular fishing trip reposes in the attic of Knight's store.

Another favorite water spot for Hot Coffee outdoorsmen is Okahay Creek, which feeds the Leaf. "Okahay" is an Indian name which has been Anglicized into "Cohay" by the area's latter-day inhabitants.

At one time, Hot Coffee boasted a post office, a gin, a mill and even a doctor — L. W. "Wilson" Lyman, who practiced there from the early '20s until the 50s.

"I can remember when the cotton would be lined up for miles at that gin," Knight, who was then managing the operation, says.

Mrs. Knight acknowledges that many days would pass during cotton season before she'd ever lay eyes on her groom.

Calhoun Baptist Church, named for Jesse Calhoun, a former superintendent of education, and Old Hopewell Baptist Church are primary places of worship for Hot Coffeeans.

The children of Hot Coffee attend Taylorsville schools in Smith County Hopewell Attendance Center or Mount Olive School, both in Covington County, depending upon where they live.

Hot Coffee is the birthplace of such notables as actress Stella Stevens (formerly Stella Eggleston); the Rev. Barney Walker, Southern Baptist preacher; Lamar McLeod, former vice president of Westinghouse; actor Dana Andrews, born at a nearby locale called Dont; and Ethel Knight, author of *The Echo of the Black Horn*, a tale of Newt Knight.

Newt and his band of what-turned-out-to-be raiders did indeed roam the forests and farmlands of Hot Coffee on excursions into Covington from Jones County in search of food and shelter during the Civil War. Newt, of course, is written into history as the founder of The Free State of Jones, and was a rebellious spirit who turned on the grey-coated Rebels themselves.

Some say when Leaf River mists polish the trunks of ancient oaks and a hundred years' cushion of forest floor muffles the sounds of the 1980s, that it is still possible to hear the mournful summons of Newt's horn.

Hot Coffee's unsullied beauty is such that one would almost believe the last hundred years had indeed never touched its beautiful terrain, and that the men of the woods still roam its paths.

After all, in a place with a tag like Hot Coffee, anything's possible."

NATURE'S AID—A CURE ALL

Pat James, a well-known newspaperman lived in Hot Coffee as a lad and he wrote a humorous paper about the village in 1938 as a volunteer WPA writer. James described a bottled mineral water, Nature's Aid, as being available from the V. O. Knight Store (now the R. J. Knight Store). He proclaimed that "since the introduction of Nature's Aid, we have no need for a doctor." It is one opinion that the mineral water may have come from the springs at Bay Springs in Smith County.

James also told about how the local justice of the peace, Eli Pridgen, used the miracle water in his duties.

"The village J.P. married people, both in love and emergency union, granted divorces, settled family and neighborhood rows out of court, sat up with the sick, helped the midwife in emergencies, buried the dead, pulled teeth, using the same tooth puller for all patients, never sterilized his pullikins except with NATURE'S AID and never heard of blood poison. Justices of the Peace amounted to something in those good old days."

POST OFFICES NEAR HOT COFFEE

There have been at least four post offices in the general area of Hot Coffee. They and the postmasters who worked in them, are listed below in chronological order.

OCOHA BRIDGE

Raybon F. Craft and James Talley, September 2, 1832 to July 30, 1833; Samuel Craft, July 30, 1833 to July 20, 1844. The offices was closed on July 20, 1844.

OAKOHAY

Samuel C. Craft, Jan. 9, 1850 to Jan. 25, 1867. Office closed from Jan. 25, 1867 to Sept. 24, 1873. Thomas J. Craft, Sept. 24, 1873 to Oct. 3, 1878; Eli C. Pridgen, Oct. 3, 1878 to July 7, 1880; James E. Terrall, July 7, 1880 to July 15, 1897; Nan C. Terrall, July 15, 1897 to Jan. 27, 1899; Nan C. Brill, Jan. 27, 1899 to Apr. 2, 1906. This office closed permanently on Apr. 2, 1906 with the mail being sent to Collins.

REDDOCH

Caleb M. Reddoch, Oct. 2, 1876 to Nov. 15, 1876. Office closed from Nov. 15, 1876 to Apr. 23, 1883; Caleb M. Reddoch, Apr. 23, 1883 to Jan. 9, 1891; Thomas G. Crawford, Jan. 9, 1891 to May 3, 1893; John H. Crawford, May 3, 1893 to Sept. 2, 1902. Office closed Sept. 2, 1902 with mail going to Leddrew.

ASTOR

Asa B. Carter, May 29, 1899 to Dec. 7, 1903; Van O. Knight, Dec. 7, 1903 to Nov. 29, 1904; Asa B. Carter, Nov. 29, 1904 to Jan. 15, 1907. Office closed Jan. 15, 1907 — mail to Taylorsville.

LEDDROW (LEDDREW)

The spelling of this post office is Leddrow in the postal records, but Leddrew on an old map. It was located slightly northwest of Reddoch Ferry in the northeastern part of the Covington County.

Ora F. Grantham was the only postmaster from its opening on July 2, 1901 to October 14, 1905. After its closing, the mail was sent to Oakahay.

CALHOUN SCHOOL

The exact date of the beginning of Calhoun School was about 1915, after a previous building had burned. At this time several schools consolidated into one school. It is believed that the newly consolidated school was named after J. T. Calhoun, who was the superintendent of the Covington County schools from 1908-1915.

The smaller schools that joined together were Belmont, Reddoch, Gilmer, and Guinea. An unknown WPA writer in 1938 wrote a description of one of these schools and it is believed to have been the Belmont School. The WPA writer obtained his information from W. J. Barnes of Collins.

"It was a small one room building made of split logs with hard uncomfortable benches, one small window with wooden shutter and one door gave the needed light and ventilation. The walls were full of large cracks, while those in the floor were fully four inches wide. This was the old type subscription school where the patrons paid a small fee for each child's tuition.

"The children were first taught their ABCs and then passed to the first reader. The textbooks included the blue back speller, *McGuffey's Reader* and *Barnes History*. The slate and pencil were used exclusively as there were no tablets and pencils in those days. Spelling matches were held every Friday afternoon and in this the children took great delight.

"Numerous games were played in which the whole school usually took part. Some of these games were Dog and Deer, Bull Pen and Rollie-Hollie (believed to have been a marbles game).

"As there were no fences around the school campus, during the noon hour it was not uncommon for the old 'cow' to invite herself to partake of the children's lunches and it sometimes required three or four boys to keep her off while the children ate.

"About twenty-six years ago (between 1910 and 1915) this old building burned and the county built a new school which was consolidated, being one of the first of its kind. Some of the pupils were Willie Barnes, Mattie Barnes, John Reddoch, Henry Pridgen, Jim Wilson, and Fannie and Susie Huff."

Ethel Knight also recalls that some teachers were Ruby Barnes, Lila Duckworth, Climon Pridgen, Clara Pridgen and Ethel Knight.

The closing date of the school is unknown, but it was open for the lower grades as late as 1937. There were four teachers.

CALHOUN BAPTIST CHURCH

This church was organized in April 1923 with Rev. Dan Moulder as moderator and the church's first Pastor.

The following were charter members; Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Carter, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. A. Carter, Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Knight, Mr. and Mrs. V. O. Knight, Miss Ollie Knight, Mr. Curtis Knight, Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Knight, Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Ellzey, and Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Pridgen.

The first deacons were Mr. A. B. Carter, Mr. V. O. Knight, Mr. J. B. A. Carter, and Mr. B. F. Pridgen, Mr. A. B. Carter was the first church's clerk.

The following is a list of the church's pastors; Rev. Dan Moulder, Rev. Gurlie Henderson, Rev. Jasper Thornton, Rev. James Johnson, Rev. W. F. Fairchilds, Rev. Carl Sullivan, Rev. M. E. Childers, Rev. W. P. Blair, Rev. S. F. Carlisle, Rev. Ben Carlisle, Rev. Gary Berry, Rev. Wiley Heath, Rev. Glen Edmonds, Rev. Howard Merritt, and Rev. Bob Rogers (present). The longest serving pastor was Rev. S. F. Carlisle, 1947-1969.

The present building was built under Rev. Dan Moulder and remodeled under Rev. Howard Merritt. The new fellowship hall was added under Rev. Ben Carlisle and a new building containing Sunday School rooms was built under Rev. Howard Merritt, a new constitution and by-Laws were written under Rev. Bob Rogers.

Deacons in the church are Quinn Dickens, Jimmy Carter, Tom Powell, Otis Wolverton, Jimmy Gentry, and Pat Duckworth, H. L. Quick, Ransom Dees, Fred Pruden, Joel Pridgen, Buford Stroud and Johnny Flood.

There is a disagreement about how the church got its name, but the most likely story seems to be the association with the Calhoun school, which was once across the road from the church.

The Calhoun School was already in existence when the church was formed in 1923. The congregation immediately built a sanctuary next to the Calhoun School, and took the name Calhoun Baptist Church,

since all the young people in the area went to that school.

Atop the first church building was a fish, a secret symbol for Christianity in the New Testament times. This was whittled from wood by Eli Pridgen.

HOT COFFEE TODAY

The R. J. Knight Store is still open for business with Judy (Knight) and Herbert Harper as the latest proprietors. Down the road a piece is McDonald's Store and up the road, toward Mount Olive, is the Christmas tree farm of Judy (Carter) and Frank Dobbs. The Calhoun Baptist Church continues to be an active house of worship for the community. Hot Coffee is moving into the more hurried life of larger towns, but it is moving, decidedly, at its own pace.

RESOURCES

Hattiesburg American, March 1984, two articles by Pam Johnson; the WPA writings of Pat James; "The Post Office History of Covington County" by Broox Sledge; Ransom Dees; Bob Rogers; Ethel Knight; Helen Shows; and Judy and Herb Harper.



Mrs. V. O. Knight, Jennie, was one of the charter members of the Calhoun Baptist Church that was organized in 1923. There were 16 members who started the church. Mrs. Knight is shown here with her granddaughter, Lydia Shows, in front of her home. The house is still a part of "downtown Hot Coffee." (Photo courtesy of Helen Shows)

IT

The unusual name for this little area, located on Highway 49 between Collins and Mount Olive, is said to have come about when a couple from Illinois came south looking for a place to live and when the husband saw the site he said, "this is it." "It" it became. The couple had a big sign across the Dixie Highway that said, "This is It." V. O. Campbell carried the mail from 1921 to 1923 in the area and he recalls that the couple (possibly the name was Cox) had a "cold drink, candy bar store" located on the then ungraveled Dixie Highway, (now Highway 49).

Daniel Knight recalls that as a young boy in the 1930s he would go occasionally to It to see boxing matches. The boxing ring was outdoors and hot dogs and other concessions were available. He recalls one match between a boxer named "Red Dollar and a cousin of mine from Mize named Jones."

RESOURCES

V. O. Campbell, Howard Walton, and Daniel Knight.

JAYNESVILLE

Jaynesville is today a rural community in northeastern Jefferson Davis County, but it was at one time in Covington County and was the site of the first post office in Covington County.

POST OFFICE

The first name of the first postmaster could not be read, but it could be seen that it ended with "la" or "lm".

(— — —lm?) Jaynes, Mar. 20, 1826 to Oct. 30, 1828; Martin M. Nair, Oct. 30, 1828 to Feb. 22, 1836; Jeior McAfee, Feb. 22, 1836 to Apr. 6, 1837; Duncan Wilkinson, Apr. 6, 1837 to Jan. 2, 1839; Joshua R. White, Jan. 2, 1839 to June 12, 1839. Office closed from June 12, 1839 to Dec. 28, 1839.

Henry Strong, Dec. 28, 1839 to Jan. 2, 1842; Jacob R. (Isley, Isler or Jiles?) Jan. 2, 1842 to May 15, 1843.

Office closed again, May 15, 1843 to Mar. 15, 1844.

Joshua R. White, Jr., Mar. 15, 1844 to May 30, 1850; Willis Magee, May 30, 1850 to Dec. 19, 1851; Joseph P. Norwood, Dec. 19, 1851 to Nov. 16, 1854; E. J. Magee, Nov. 16, 1854 to June 8, 1855.

Closed again, June 8, 1855 to June 8, 1857.

Daniel W. McInnis, June 8, 1857 to April 13, 1866; John C. McInnis, Apr. 13, 1866 to April 14, 1870.

Closed, Apr. 14, 1870 to May 20, 1870.

Alex D. F. Williamson, May 20, 1870 to Jan. 27, 1876.

T. I. Hubbard, Jan. 27, 1876 to Feb. 16, 1876.

William J. Hubbard, Feb. 16, 1876 to (date unreadable).

The name recorded after William J. Hubbard was "Thomas J." (unreadable), with the notation following, "Now in Simpson county." This was probably a case of determining that when the office was moved from one home or store to the other it had, in fact, been moved into another county. The closure in this case, from Covington to Simpson county, appears to have been made sometime around the 1880's.

HOPEWELL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (Jaynesville)

The Hopewell Presbyterian Church was first organized April, 1830, the church building at that time being a log school house owned by D. W. McInnis and located on his place about five miles south of the present church building. The first house being essentially a school house contained no separate place for the slaves to worship, but consisted of one large room with a pulpit in the end and with hewn logs for pews. No musical instrument was to be had and the song books used were the "Gospel Hymns" written without music. Some of the singers furnished the "air" (tune) while others sang the songs.

The organization was perfected under the leadership of Rev. Jacob Rickhow who was at the same time pastor of the Sharon Presbyterian church. All the members of the first organization originally belonged to the Sharon church (Magee, Mississippi) but moved their membership to the newly organized Hopewell Presbyterian church. Some of the charter members of the church were John McFarland (elder), Mary McFarland, Archable Wilkinson, Mary Wilkinson, Effie McFarland, Daniel McFarland, Mary McFarland, Archable McCollum, Mary McCollum, Dugal McFarland, and Hugh McFarland.

As the little organization struggled along other members joined from time to time. John McLaurin, Allen Wilkinson, Roderic Mathison, Appalona Flowers, Jewett Flowers, John Hamilton, and Elizabeth Stewart were some of the first members to join the church.

For the first seven years after organization, no record was kept of the sessional sessions. Although Mr. Rickhow organized the church, apparently the first regular pastor was Rev. P. H. Fullinwider who served the little congregation from 1830 to 1834. During most of this time he was also pastor at Sharon. Rev. Jacob Rickhow became pastor in 1834 and served until

February 1840 when he was succeeded by Rev. A. R. Graves. Mr. Graves was father of Rev. Butler Graves and at the time of his pastorate of the Hopewell church was also principal of a Seminary High School at the site of the present town of Seminary, the town being named for the school.

For sixteen years Mr. Graves kept the little flock together adding members at each series of revival meeting each summer, and in 1856 the members of the church decided to erect a church building, the present Hopewell Church building being the result. Neil Mathison was awarded the contract and was given until January 1, 1857 to complete the structure. The lumber was all heart pine, sawed by an old time "upright" saw propelled by a waterwheel. The lumber was all dressed, tongued, and grooved by hand and all the posts were morticed into sills and plates. Many pegs and few nails were used in putting up the building. Balconies were built on each side to accommodate the slaves. Contributions of money, time, and materials were given to pay for the church.

The church remains very much today as it was in 1830. It is being preserved by a small, but dedicated membership. The current pastor is Rev. Woody Markert.

HOPEWELL SCHOOL

The first location of the school was in Clem. The next school was a one-room building located between the church and the cemetery. The opening date of the school is unknown, but it was probably before 1830. It closed in 1918 and the students went to Clem School.

Some of the teachers were Eunice McMillan, Semmie Herrington, Margie Ramsey Polk, Guy Milloy, Mary Magee, D. McLaurin, Lula Drummond, Lula Benson, and Jenny Fairley.

While Jaynesville was once a thriving little village with a gin, merchantile and even a hat shop, it is today a residential area with the Hopewell Church as a vital part of the past and the present.

An interesting bit of history is connected with the barn on the A. E. Ramsey family homestead in the Jaynesville Community. The barn was constructed with lumber from the Mish School, located between Mount Olive and Ora. When the school was closed about 1910 the building was dismantled and the barn built with the materials.

RESOURCES

Rev. Woody Markert; Betty Ramsey; Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Ramsey, Sr.; Margie Ramsey Polk; "History of Hopewell Presbyterian Church," by Mrs. Jessie Ramsey McAlexander Crump and Ralph Ramsey; and "The Post Office History of Covington County" by Broox Sledge.

KELLY

The first settlers to this area, six miles east of Seminary, came in 1848 and were Kellys. They set up their homes and farms on a small creek. By 1861, there were several families in the area and since most of them were named Kelly, the creek and the community also took the name.

The school located there was first called Byran and later Kelly Creek. John Redmon was a student there from about 1913-1925 and he recalls that at one time an unaccredited four-year high school was there with Frank Jordan as principal. At some times there were as many as 120 students, with three teachers.

Some of the teachers whom Mr. Redmon recalls are Bessie Walters, Beulah Garraway, W. E. Lott, Mr. Wally, John Kelly, Allie McLeod, Carl McLeod (a principal), Palmae Graham, Mrs. Ledrew Windam, Rutha Knight (Mrs. Burra Mitchell), Eleanor Speed, Mamie Ethel Davis, Cora Newton, A. R. Barlow, Pat Harper, Oscar Cole, Bob Cole, Eddie Lott, Hazel Davis (Shoemake), Florence Mounger, and Maudie Norris (Clark).

The school closed in 1928 and was consolidated with Seminary.

RESOURCES

John Redmon, Mrs. R. C. (Ina) Thaxton, Winnie Mae Napier Jordan and Vondell Lee Dunagin.



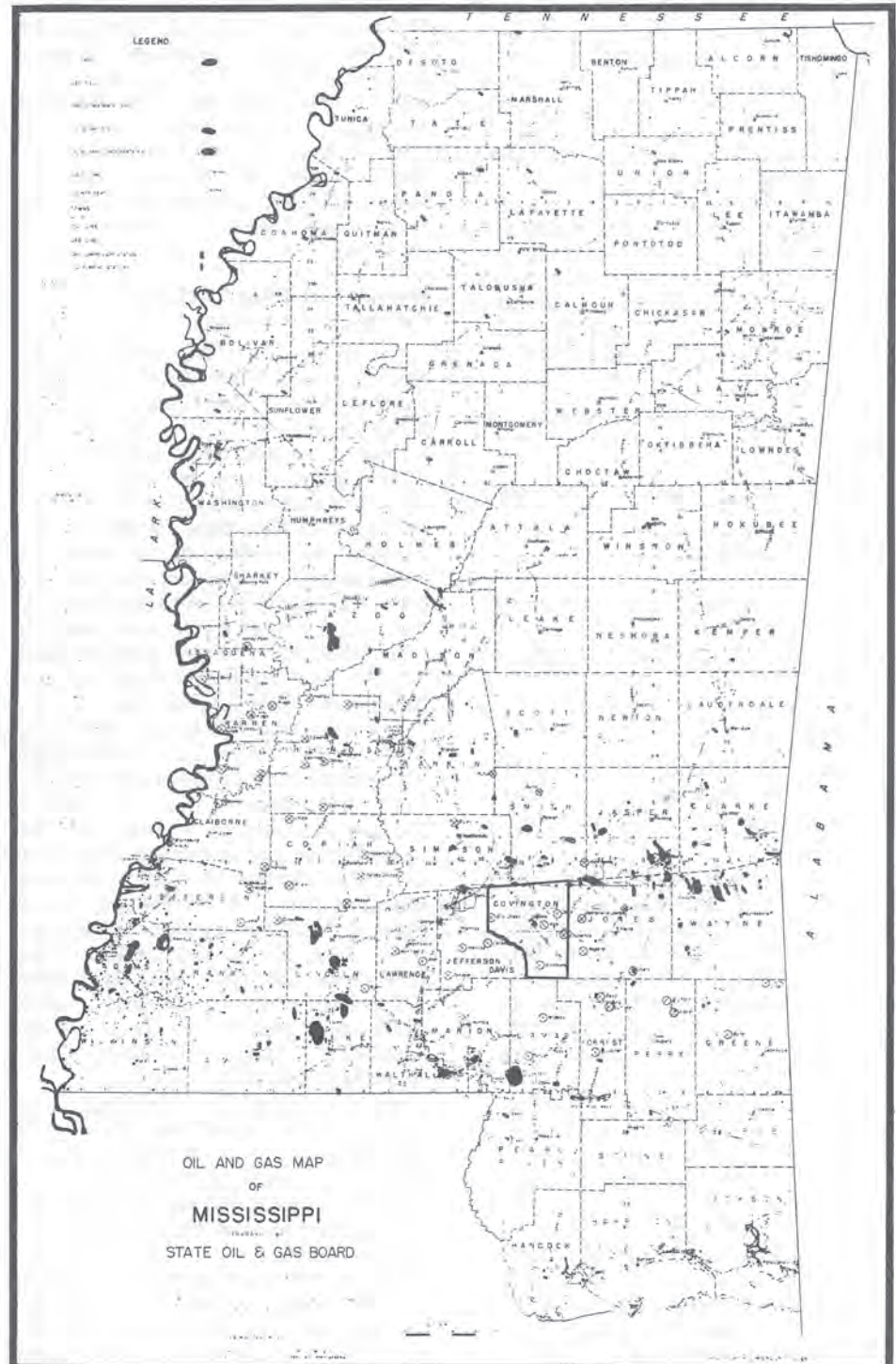
This basketball team represented Kelly Creek School in 1923-24. They are (from left to right) Thomas Cranford, Harvey Speed, Burley Rutland, John Redmon and R. D. Blackwell. Note the various styles of basketball shoes and the garters for their socks. (Photo courtesy of John Redmon.)

KOLA

Many little lumber towns like Kola flourished around the early 1900s when the railroad came through and timber became big business. The first mill at Kola was built in 1903 by Maxwell Nolan on land he

purchased from John Brown Pickering, just south of Collins.

The mill had a capacity of 7,500 board feet and is believed to have hired as many as 300 people. With its location in the midst of a dense forest on the banks of the Okatoma and near the railroad, getting the lumber to market was very convenient.



This map shows some of the gas and oil lines that come through Covington County, making it a major location for the storage and distribution of these products. The circles with Xs in them on the map denote salt domes. (Map courtesy of the State Oil and Gas Board)

Almost instantly a town sprung up. A commissary to sell goods to the workers was built; a boarding house and hotel combination was located near the office of the businesses.

Some estimates say that as many as 40 acres of houses were built for the workers; others lived in camp cars. These cars were frame buildings that could be moved on the railroad track as needed.

The mill employed two doctors: Ransom Welch and D. T. Allred. The services of the doctors were included in the benefits of the workers.

KOLA POST OFFICE

The Kola post office was housed in the mill commissary; it opened on September 11, 1899. The postmasters were as follows: Lucy A. Thames, Sept. 11, 1899 to Aug. 6, 1901. Office closed from Aug. 6, 1901 to January 29, 1902. Helen M. Canham, Jan. 29, 1902 to Jan. 29, 1903; Joseph M. McCormick, Jan. 29, 1903 to May 2, 1908; Leon M. Noland, May 2, 1908 to Nov. 17, 1914; William L. Rigby, Nov. 17, 1914 to Oct. 29, 1918; Henrietta Pickering, Oct. 29, 1918 to July 1, 1919; Wm. L. Rigby, July 1, 1919 to Mar. 15, 1922. The office closed Mar. 15, 1922 and the mail went to Collins.

KOLA SCHOOL

The workers brought their families with them to Kola so it was necessary to have a school. The first school was in a dwelling house owned by the company. The second building had two rooms and two teachers. Because of the large number of students the

teachers sometimes taught as many as 100 students.

Willie Watts recalls that the early school had a "chart class" for first year students. The "charts" would help to teach the alphabet and would have written on them "A is for Apple," "B is for banana," etc. After mastery of the ABCs the student would be promoted into the primer and finally into the first grade.

Some of the teachers at Kola School were Lena Moore (Langston), Mrs. Welch, Pat Harper, Harrison Harper, Oscar Cole, Bob Cole, Calvin Daughtrey, Mrs. McNeil, Elsa Rigby, Mrs. Wilson Bryant and Maggie Rogers.

The mill closed in 1927 and in 1928 the school was closed and the students went to Collins.

KOLA CHURCH

There was also a church at Kola, but it appears to have been rather small and short-lived. It is known that the school once met in the church building. Little information is available regarding the church.

RHYMES VENEER MILL, INC.

On March 10, 1952 Holden Rhymes began a mill on the site of the original Kola sawmill. Unlike its predecessor, this mill utilized only hardwood timber. At times there were as many as 100 workers employed by the mill either directly in the plant or in timber procurement. When the plant opened it was the only manufacturing plant in Covington County.



The Rhymes Veneers, Inc. plant (above) was built in 1951 near the same location as the earlier Kola Mill, started in 1903. There were as many as 100 workers employed by the Rhymes Mill and when it opened it was the only manufacturing plant in Covington County. After the Veneer mill partially burned in January of 1966, the plant was moved to Highway 49. (Photo courtesy of Holden Rhymes)

In January of 1966 one-half of the mill burned and Mr. Rhymes relocated on Highway 49, just south of Collins. Part of the equipment of the Kola mill was still operable and with added capital he enlarged and modernized the operation. In the fall of 1972, the mill was sold to Masonite Corporation.

OIL AND GAS PIPELINES AND STORAGE TANKS

In the general Kola area are at least eight plants that deal in the pumping or storing of petroleum products. In recent years the number of barrels of oil and gas that is distributed through the area has grown tremendously.

In the late 70s and early 80s Jack King of Chevron compiled statistics regarding the amount of petroleum shipped through this area. His estimates state that in a 24 hour period 218 truck loads, with an average of 1,635,000 gallons per load, are shipped from the Kola/Collins area.

These enormous tanks are dotted on what once had been timberland and later farmland. The plants are sometimes called "tank farms," and the companies keep the "farms" immaculately groomed.

In addition to the petroleum industry located in the Kola area there are two construction businesses: McQueen Contracting Company and Saulters Construction Co.

RESOURCES

Willie Watts, Ircel Pickering, James Pickering, Mrs. D. W. Giles' WPA writings, Jack King, David Kay, Holden Rhymes, and "The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

Collins, Miss., 4/26 1919

IN ACCORD WITH

Collins Motor Company

O. C. McRANEY, MANAGER

PHONE NO. 36

M. W. Pickering

Kola, Miss.

1 Touring # 2992805 525-
 2 Oil 4388
 2 Gas 21.66
 1 Grease 25
 1 Oil 80
 1 Grease 65

Read OK

3# Grease 59.74
 75
 59.79

Less Deposit 25- 567.99

The above receipt was made to W. T. Pickering of Kola, Mississippi on April 26, 1919 after the purchase of one "touring car" for \$525.00. Also included on the bill was freight—\$43.88; tax—\$21.66; gas—.25¢; oil—80¢ and grease—75¢. The purchase was made from Collins Motor Company, O. C. McRaney, manager. (Courtesy of James Pickering)

LEAF RIVER COMMUNITY

The history of Leaf River Community in northeast Covington County, like many southern communities, is closely interwoven with the history of the community church. It is a well established fact that early settlers in our area put a real priority on quickly establishing a school and a church.

By 1820, there was already a school in the Leaf River community, although the exact location is unknown. It was to this school that Rev. Norvell Robertson, then pastor of Providence Baptist Church in north Forrest County, came to set up a monthly church meeting. Several families of the community had asked Rev. Robertson to come, and because there were not enough members to set up a church, they were called the Leaf River Branch of Providence Church. The name Leaf River was selected because of the closeness of the river, although it does not flow directly through the community.

Norvell Robertson was a good choice to be the leader of this congregation. Robertson had come to Providence in 1818 from Virginia by way of Georgia. He brought his own family and four other families with him. The name Providence was chosen because it was the name of their church in Georgia.

Thanks to the autobiography of Robertson and the painstaking written minutes of both of these churches, we are left with a fairly good record of those early days.

The monthly meeting at Leaf River finally grew enough so that in 1828 the members requested a dismission from the Providence church to begin a new church. This was done on September 18, 1829. The names of those first members were Gillis Sumrall, James Reddoch, Albert Knight, John Knight, Sr., Caleb Hill, William Knight, Williams Duckworth, John Knight, Jr., Samuel Ainsworth, Jesse N. Roberts, William Bynum, Sr., Keziah Speed, Elizabeth Jolly, Mary Young, Sarah Hill, Anna Reddoch, Tolly Knight, Sally Speed, Mason Knight, Tolly Duckworth, Keziah Thomas, Sally Duckworth, Keziah Bryant, Ferougel Ainsworth, Ruth Duckworth, Jeriah Sellers, Sophia Duckworth, Elizabeth Knight, and seven "colored persons": Henry, Lewis, Levin, Esther, Katey, Lucy, and Dinah.

Robertson and his family moved to Leaf River in about 1831 and it is believed he continued to make his living there as a blacksmith, teacher and farmer. Norvell Robertson, Jr. succeeded his father as pastor of the church for fifteen years.

In May of 1928, the church celebrated its 100th anniversary and the then-clerk, J. M. Welch, gave the following account: "In 1830 the church had built a house of hewn

logs and dressed plank floors with a department cut off for the colored people. The building was just north of where the present building now stands. The present building was finished in 1858."

That building was to stand until fire destroyed it in 1938. The following is an account of that fire written by Mrs. W. W. Speed in an article in *The Progressive Farmer*, November 1940: "On the first Sunday of November in 1938, the fire in the (church) stove crackled merrily and a high wind blew from the north, the young people kept complaining of hearing rats in the attic. An older woman discovered it was a fire on the roof.

"The walls were high and there was no ladder and no water. Trucks and cars pulled out in every direction seeking help—but it was no use. The name plate nailed on an upright column was the last to fall, and this 'flaring cross' was a spectacle that all present will never forget. The pastor preached his sermon across the road; a free will offering of \$40 was taken up, and while the fire still burned and tears still glistened in the eyes of many, a meeting of the membership was called for that night to consider rebuilding.

"Someone said, 'We have had such a bad crop year, we can't rebuild a church now.' Mrs. A. F. Bell, a faithful member, spoke up saying, 'We can if we start now, and we can if we believe in the promises of God.' H. B. Moss added, 'We can start rebuilding in six weeks if we try.'"

The members of neighboring Bethel Methodist Church immediately offered their building to the Baptists. The offer was accepted.

The rebuilding was started in less than six weeks and the resulting story won a \$100 grand prize in *The Progressive Farmer* 1939-40 Church Improvement Contest. A full page article and photo of the building accompanied Mrs. Speed's story.

Altogether about \$2,500 to \$3,000 was spent on the building. Mrs. Speed concludes her article by saying that the members were so excited they applied for a community booth at the South Mississippi Fair at Laurel. The display, A New Day for Farm Communities, used a sawdust map that showed the improved church, the new telephone lines, the gas line, the REA lines, the farm-to-market roads, the new paved highways, and the entire display won a blue



These were the students of the Leaf River School about 1903. The school sat adjacent to the present Leaf River Baptist Church, and is thought it have been started as early as 1820. The school was closed in 1929. The students, as identified by Maude Rogers Walker, Sylvester Knight and Nelda Mitchell are (from left to right): front row—Marion Speed, Ross Speed, Terrell Speed, Clinton Knight, Sylvester Knight, and Wood Speed; second row—Kate Knight Tisdale, Hessie Knight, Rutha Knight Mitchell, Rema Speed, Maude Rogers Walker, Eleanor Speed, Myrtle Rogers Speed, and Nina Knight; third row—Myrtle Speed McGee, Hilda Rogers, Anna Duckworth, Maggie Rogers, Chellie Knight, Annis Speed, Maude Knight, and Rose Speed Edwards; top row—Prof. Charlie Andrews, R. B. Knight, Truitt Speed, Cleveland Speed, and Bob Powell. (Photo courtesy of Nelda Spell Mitchell)

ribbon. The winning prize money was added to the building fund for a community house.

According to photos in *The Baptist Record* June 3, 1971, this building was extensively remodeled and the dedication was on May 30, 1971. This remains the church building today.

Leaf River Baptist Church was also pictured in a WPA written history of Mississippi. It included photos of the church building that burned in 1939 and of covered graves in the cemetery. The practice of erecting frame buildings over graves appears to have been a fairly common practice at one time, although none of these remain in the Leaf River Cemetery at this time.

On May 21, 1978, the Leaf River Baptist Church celebrated its 150th anniversary. It was noted in the history presented that day that Rev. S. F. Carlisle was "our minister for the longest period of time, having served from September 1945 to April 1968."

LEAF RIVER SCHOOL

Unfortunately, a detailed history of the Leaf River school is not available. While some believe a school was in existence around 1820, there are no records to verify this. The school was a one-room building near the church site. The school was closed about 1929, and the students were then bused to Salem School.

This was a subscription school and each child, if he was able, would pay \$1.50 each month as tuition. The teachers of the school would board around in the community, remaining at each home for one month. Some of the teachers were Ab Gissith, John Dale, Olivia Grantham, Wilmer Rogers, and Eula Mae Dees.

The students purchased their books at Williamsburg, the county seat. Tablets and pencils were almost unknown and most of the children used slates and pencils.



At one time it was common place to cover graves with a frame building. This photo of covered graves in the Leaf River cemetery appeared in a WPA written history of Mississippi in the 1930s. (Photo courtesy of Dot McGee Vaughn)

DONT POST OFFICE

There has been one post office in the area, named Dont. The reason for the name is unknown, but the location can be identified today although there is no building remaining. George H. Pond was postmaster from May 23, 1894 to October 17, 1900. He was followed by Benjamin C. Duckworth from October 17, 1900 to February 15, 1907. Postal service was discontinued on February 15, 1907 and the mail was sent to Collins.

It was at Dont that Dana Andrews, an actor of some renown, was born. Andrews was the son of Rev. Charles Andrews and Annie Speed Andrews. He moved with his family at age five to Texas, but he has kept in close contact with relatives that remain here.

Andrews, featured in more than 75 movies, was honored by the people of Covington County on November 17, 1978. Celebrations were held in Mount Olive, Seminary and Collins. This was spearheaded by the Collins Rotary Club, Billy Paul Rogers, general chairman.

In 1976 Andrews was selected as the Mississippian of the Year by the Mississippi Broadcasters Association. In 1984 Mississippi State University presented a festival of his films on the Starkville campus. Andrews and his wife presently live in California where he continues to be active in acting and as a speaker for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Leland Speed, Mayor of Jackson from 1945 to 1949 was also a native of the Leaf River Community.

Another distinguished Leaf River resident was Dr. Robert Powell, born January 22, 1888. He was an outstanding minister of the Regular Baptist Convention and served in many leadership roles in the nation-wide organization. He and his family moved to Tacoma, Washington, so the two children could be in a cooler climate. They both had severe skin conditions that were aggravated by heat and sun. Previously, his ministry carried them to churches in Louisiana and Texas. The Los Angeles Baptist College library is named in his honor. He died on July 30, 1970 in Tacoma.

His parents' home (Mr. and Mrs. Jim Powell) has been renovated by Col. and Mrs. Frazier (Dot McGee) Vaughn and is believed to be over 100 years old.

A log house, believed to be about 140 years old, also remains in the vicinity. The house is owned by Helen Tisdale Walters of Hattiesburg and she and her family use it on weekends. It is not known who built the house, but Mr. and Mrs. Willie Rogers lived in it at one time.

Nelda and Dennis Mitchell have recently moved another log house to their property from about three miles away. This house was built in 1877.



Dana Andrews (shown on the right) was honored by his native Covington County with a Dana Andrews Day on November 17, 1979. Andrews, born in the Dont community near Leaf River School where his father was a teacher, is a veteran actor with more than 70 films to his credit. He is shown here receiving a key to the city by the Mayor of Collins, the late Eddie Blackwell. Behind Andrews is former Covington County Chancery Clerk, Doyle Keys. (Photo Courtesy of Kathryn Belle Speed)

JACKSON MILITARY ROAD

Another reminder of the early days of our county is the remainder of the Jackson Military Road. After the War of 1812, the need for a road in Mississippi was acknowledged. One person noted that it took longer for the mail to get to the Mississippi territory from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania than to get to Europe. The road started in Columbia, Tennessee, and ran through Muscle Shoals, Alabama. It then crossed Mississippi from northeast to southwest through the Mississippi Piney Woods and ended at Madisonville, Louisiana. Built between 1816 and 1820, portions of the road can still be found in Covington County.

Today the Leaf River Community is primarily a farming community with soybeans, peanuts, cattle, wheat and poultry as the main products.

Remnants of the past are still apparent, such as the grave of Norvell Robertson. While it is hidden in a grove of trees on land owned by a lumber company, it is still cared for by his descendants. He and the other early settlers of the area left a legacy of hardworking, caring people.

RESOURCES

Materials for this chapter was obtained from Dot McGee Vaughn; W. C. Robertson (a great-great-grandson of Norvell Robertson); Nelda Mitchell; Jim Tisdale; Mrs. James Arrington; Kathryn Belle Speed; the Leaf River Baptist Church History; *The Progressive Farmer*, November 1940; *Mississippi: The Land and the People*, by John K. Bettersworth, and Hudson Speed.

LEBANON

Lebanon Baptist Church is located just off Highway 535 in the southern part of the county. The church was organized in 1902 and for almost three years services were held under a brush arbor. The first building was completed in April 1905. The one-room church was heated with a pot belly stove. A. B. Graham donated land for the church and the Lott family donated land for the cemetery. T. W. Lott hauled the first load of lumber to begin the first building. Mr. Lott owned a sawmill, but it is not known if he cut the lumber.

Rev. Merrit and Rev. Abercrombie helped to organize the church. Rev. Merrit was called to serve as the first pastor. The exact number of charter members is unknown, but it is believed to be twelve.

The school in the community was Kelly Creek.

In 1905 the church licensed Rev. Jack Cranford to preach; in 1907 Rev. Joe Barrett was licensed to preach.

The early baptisms for the congregation were held at Will Hicks' Water Mill Creek.

Transportation to the first services of the church was provided by mules and horses.

Some of the trees still stand today, in front of the church, that were used as hitching posts for the animals. Water for these early years was obtained from a shallow well nearby. According to Barbara Graham, the "water smelled bad and tasted the same. No one really knew the cause of the foul smell and taste, but we were glad when the well was replaced in 1954."

Sometime in the early 30s Sunday School rooms and a porch were added to the original building. The need for another structure was felt in 1954 and the present building was erected. As the church has grown, an educational building has been added that includes a kitchen and dining area.

In 1974 a pastorium was built for the pastor and his family. Some of the pastors who have served the church, as recalled by Barbara Graham, are Rev. Benedick, Rev. Try Pearson, Rev. Ray Leffler, Rev. Leroy Graham, Rev. Edd Sullivan, Rev. Reese Ackling, Rev. George Gerald Aultman, Rev. Nellitan, Rev. Billy Cavoy, Rev. James Kelso, and the present pastor, Rev. Mike Whiddon.

RESOURCE

Barbara Graham



Those shown in front of the Lebanon Baptist Church in the late 1930's are (left to right) Alex Davis and Rubin Graham, church deacons; and Jimmy Dale Windam and her mother Willie Mae Windam. (Photo courtesy of Barbara Graham)

LIBERTY

Liberty, in the southwestern part of Covington County, is named for Liberty Baptist Church. Unfortunately, many of the early records of this historic church have been lost, but some of the pertinent facts remain.

The church was organized at Hemeter school on June 20, 1873. The organizing body was the Ebenezer Baptist Association. Elder K. M. Watkins was moderator and Elder J. Graham was clerk.

The charter members were: M. Hemeter, Gemima Hemeter, G. W. Hemeter, J. J. Hemeter, J. D. Kelly, Emmaline Kelly, D. G. Bullock, Rhonda Bullock, A. J. Robertson, E. P. Robertson, Catherine Watts, and S. A. Robertson.

According to Sandra Shoemaker Lott, it is believed the first church was located for some thirty years on property now belonging to Dale Shoemaker. In the early 1900s the church was moved to its present location just off the Williamsburg to Seminary Road.

The land for this building was donated by Michael Shoemaker. Some of the early preachers were W. C. Wallace, 1901; R. D. Bounds, 1902; A. A. Bryant, 1903; A. T. Abercrombie, 1904; and I. L. Stove, 1911.

Rev. William (Bill) Payne currently serves the membership of 111 as full-time pastor.

RESOURCE

Information was obtained from Sandra Shoemaker Lott.

LOWLAND

Lowland was the site of a Covington County post office from 1892-1898. The location is unknown, but it was in the Sumrall area. The postmasters were Mary J. E. McDonald, Dec. 30, 1892 to Apr. 17, 1893; Martha J. E. McDonald, Apr. 17, 1893 to Aug. 7, 1894; Alfred T. Bufkin, Aug. 7, 1894 to July 11, 1895; Discontinued July 11, 1895 — mail to Sumrall; Re-established May 14, 1896; Willis Hartzog, May 14, 1896 to Jan. 17, 1898; Robert Laird, Jan. 17, 1898 to May 23, 1898; Giles Gates, May 23, 1898 to Sept. 9, 1898.

Notation dated Sept. 8, 1898 — "Now in Marion county."

RESOURCE

"The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

LUX

The autobiography of Norvell Robertson, Sr. states that the families of Robertson, George Granberry, Stephen Granberry, Seth Granberry, and Moses Granberry, along with William Albrittan and Allan Coward arrived in the general area of Lux in 1817. The group had been traveling for two months from their origin in Georgia. Robertson and his family later moved to the Station Creek area of Covington County.

In 1867 Joseph Bryant built a store in the area and the community was known as Bryant. About 1900 the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad came through and the citizens wanted a new name for the small village and its post office. Professor C. K. Powell desired a name that would reflect the cleanliness of the place, so he proposed the name Lux, which is a Greek word meaning clean.

POST OFFICE

The postal records show that on December 30, 1896 the "Wheelerville Post Office, formerly in Jones County, was reactivated. On November 22, 1899 the name of the office was changed from Wheelerville to Lux. It is now in Covington."

The postmasters who served this office were as follows: Robert T. Rush, Dec. 30, 1896 to Jan. 30, 1900; William J. Hamilton, Jan. 30, 1900 to Sept. 5, 1905; Julius T. Rhodes, Sept. 5, 1905 to June 5, 1911; Geo. R. Lightsey, June 5, 1911 to Mar. 10, 1917; Pauline Herrin, Mar. 10, 1917 to Oct. 21, 1918; Geo. W. Lightsey, Oct. 21, 1918 to Nov. 23, 1920.

Altie Johnson came on as postmaster Nov. 23, 1920, with a notation dated Sept. 30, 1920 of "rescinded." Geo. W. Lightsey then returned to office and served until Nov. 29, 1924 when the office of Lux was closed with the mail then being sent to Hattiesburg.

LUX OF THE PAST REMEMBERED

In 1917, a sawmill and a gin were built there and Ernest White recalls those more prosperous days with *Hattiesburg American* reporter, Sharon Wertz, in an article dated March 27, 1984.

Lux has changed since the days when Ernest White, now 80, and his bride Flonda moved here in 1929.

White recalls going to work weighing and buying cotton for Clyde Granberry's cotton gin. A couple of years later, White started work at Granberry's Lux General Merchandise store, built in 1867.

It was around this store on the Jones-Covington County line that the early community revolved.

"We sold everything from caskets and coffins to farm machinery and all kinds of patent drugs," he says. "Lots of people used to ask for mutton suet. Do you know what that was? People used it to cure everything. And Uncle Sam's liniment, too."

"Granberry raised and killed his own beef and I cut it up. People had to pay cash back then."

The Granberrys and Bufkins, founding fathers of the community, also owned sawmills and raised cotton, major enterprises back then. Because most of their workers depended upon the store for all their needs, White worked long hours, often without even time off for lunch.

"I worked from daylight until 9 o'clock at night on weekdays," he recalls. "On Saturday night, I never got off before 1 a.m."

He shows the Social Security card, dated Dec. 16, 1936, he was issued when he went to work at the store. "I made \$9 a week then," he grins. "I put \$6 in the bank and lived off \$3." He shakes his head. "That don't even sound reasonable now."

But the years brought change. The lumber was cut and cotton prices declined. Eventually the Lux General Merchandise store, as well as another store, the post office and the Methodist Church, closed down.

While the Lux of today does not have the farming and merchandizing activity of the past, it is fast becoming a popular residential area for people who work in Hattiesburg, but prefer a rural home.

RESOURCES

An article in the *Hattiesburg American*, March 27, 1984, by Sharon Wertz; autobiography of Norvell Robertson, Sr. unpublished; "The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge; and *A History of Seminary, Mississippi* by Jerry Windsor, 1975.

McDONALD

As one might suspect from the name, the community of McDonald in Southwest Covington County was begun by settlers of Scottish descent.

Angus and Catherine Buchanan McDonald immigrated from Scotland to America before 1800 and settled in Richmond County, North Carolina. One of their twelve children, Alexander S., and his bride, Elizabeth McNair, moved from North Carolina to Mississippi in about 1823.

They came with a little colony of relatives and friends, and after a short stop in Simpson County, settled in the Dry Creek area of the newly-formed (1819) Covington County.

Coming with Alexander and Elizabeth was their young son, Samuel David (Sam). Sam continued to live on his family's farm in Dry Creek until at age 36 he took a wife, Louisa Southworth, a native Covington Countian, was 18 years younger than her husband at their wedding on December 23, 1858. Soon after their wedding, Sam enlisted and served with the Confederate troops for four years.

After Sam returned from the war, he and his wife bought land close to Williamsburg, then the seat of Covington County. It was on this land that they reared their nine children: Ray, Sam, Richard, Samantha (Cissy), Alex, John, Jasper, Neil, and Laurin.

All of these children lived to reach adulthood, marry, and build homes near their parents. Thus, the large McDonald clan gave its name to the area.

THEIR LIFESTYLE WAS GENTLE AND FUN-LOVING

The following description of the McDonald clan was written by Ruth Massengale Brown and was read at a recent McDonald Family reunion.

Quarrels, squabbles, selfishness, dishonesty, divorce or desertion were traits not found in this clan of people. Concern for each other, sharing and lending a helping hand were factors that made this family unique.

In the early days, most of the McDonalds were farmers. They enjoyed a simple, rural lifestyle in which they provided for most of their physical needs, their fun and entertainment. They took much pleasure in each other's company. Families would help each other out with their work in the fields, killing hogs, and construction. When one family needed a house or barn built, all the men would gather and work on it until it was completed. The women gathered

and canned, sewed and quilted together. Sharing their produce and crops so all had plenty was just a way of life.

In the early days, going to church, fox-hunting and fiddling were the main social events. When any kind of service was held at the church everyone was there. Protracted meetings revivals were big events each year.

Fox-hunting was a sport that consumed most leisure time for the men. It is still a popular sport with some of our McDonald men. Each family had a large number of fox dogs of different ages. The men took much pleasure in raising, training and running their dogs. Each man came to identify, love and to brag about what 'a pretty mouth' his dog had, meaning his bark.

From a dog's bark they could tell if he had jumped something, what it was, and whether or not he was running or treeing the animal. Of course, all of us grew up hearing many hilarious and funny experiences of the fox hunters' times of being chased by wild cats, falling off the foot log in winter, or getting lost all night in Big Swamp. Back then the only available hunting light was for each man to carry a lighted pine knot and it didn't throw light anywhere but right around the person that was holding it. Many stories have been told of some McDonald fox hunters getting lost and



This photo of McDonald Presbyterian Church and some of the members was taken in 1950. The church was begun as a mission of Collins Presbyterian Church in 1911 and organized into a church in October of 1920. (Photo courtesy of Ruth Massengale Brown)

going around in circles for hours before coming out in unexpected places.

Since the McDonalds were such lovers of music, it was natural that many could play some musical instrument. There have always been many gifted piano, guitar, mandolin, harmonica and fiddle players among our ancestors. After a hard week's work there would usually be a Saturday night 'ho-down' or 'fiddling' at someone's house. Lively music, dancing, good food and just families and friends being together was an excellent way to end the week and it was fun for everyone.

Of course there were many fun things that happened and lots of jokes and pranks played on one another to make life interesting on the farm.

There were also frequent sightings of ghosts by various individuals while traveling at night in the community. Sometimes some unusual dummies were dressed and conveniently set up in the path of someone known to be traveling that way at a particular time. Married couples were always given an unforgettable serenade in the middle of the night to officially initiate them into married life."

THE McDONALD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

As the size of the clan enlarged, it became necessary to have a church nearby. The earlier family members had been members of a Presbyterian church in the Dry Creek Community. (The name of this church is unknown).

MAGEE

Magee was the site of the Magee School, which was located ten miles west of Collins. It was organized in 1890. It consisted of a small frame building with J. A. McLeod, Dr. C. H. Ramsay, and Professor Dixon as teachers. Some of the students were Roy Magee, Luther Magee, J. T. Mathison, W. D. McRaney, Dan McLaurin, and Bob Holloway. The closing date is unknown.

RESOURCE

The WPA writings of Mrs. Nathan Rogers, and Mrs. Jewel Boyd.

The first church meetings (Sunday school) were held in a small, one-room school house in 1911 and conducted by Rev. J. W. Allen, pastor of Collins Presbyterian Church. Soon afterward, according to Minnie McDonald, an abandoned church in the sawmill town of Collins was donated to the new congregation by Col. W. C. Wood.

The building was dismantled and moved by mule team to the present site by Sam and John McDonald. The acre of land for the church was donated by Bob Holloway, Will McLaurin and Will Schaeffer.

Because of the association with the parent church, Collins Presbyterian, the mission was called McDonald Chapel. On Sunday, October 24, 1920, thirty-eight Presbyterians signed a petition requesting the organization of the mission into a church. The request was granted, and the following committee was given the charge to organize the church: Rev. E. F. Hoffman of Collins, Alex Newton of Seminary, Rev. W. I. McInnis of Hattiesburg, R. C. Havensstern and G. D. McCormick.

The pews and pulpit for the church came from the abandoned Collins church, the church bell was given by Mrs. Alex Newton, and the collection boxes were donated by Collins Presbyterian Church.

A new building was erected on the same site during the ministry of Dr. G. T. Preer, 1950-1954. Renovations and additions have continued on this building that now serves over 100 members. Rev. John Wingard, Sr., the current pastor, is the church's first full-time minister.

In 1979 the church built a manse on land donated by Mr. and Mrs. Manford Price, in memory of Mr. Bert Carter.

RESOURCES

Information for this entry was obtained by Ruth Massengale Brown and Minnie Lee McDonald.

MATTIE

The post office of Mattie, in the northeastern part of Covington County, appears to have been located close to the Norfleet post office as the mail was sent there when it closed. Norfleet was in the home of Fred Spell between the communities of Salem and Hopewell.

Mattie had one postmaster, Asa F. Bryant, and he served from April 23, 1902 to September 14, 1905.

RESOURCES

"The Post Office History of Covington County" by Broox Sledge, and Joe Spell.

MAYBE

The name "Maybe" is shown on at least one old map, and it was located exactly on the Jones County line, approximately due east of Collins. It could be another name for Maybelle, shown just across the Jones County line on a map dated 1900. No other information is known of Maybe.

RESOURCES

Broox Sledge and Mrs. Orland Lott.

MELBA

The Melba Post Office was established on October 26, 1903 with Robert J. Fenn as the first postmaster. The exact location of Melba is unknown, but it was in Covington County until the county of Jefferson Davis was organized in 1906.

The other postmasters that served while it was in Covington County were James C. Carter, July 14, 1904 to February 13, 1905; Julius M. Robertson, February 13, 1905 to May 22, 1906; Sampson Morris, May 22, 1906 to July 2, 1906. The postal records note, as of July 2, 1906, "Now in Jefferson Davis County."

RESOURCE

"The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

MIDWAY

This was the site of Midway School, located seven miles north of Collins. The organization date is unknown, but it was absorbed by Salem and Smith Schools in 1905. The first building was a small frame structure and was said to be very uncomfortable in both the summer and the winter.

Some of the early teachers were Allie Baine, Wilmer Rogers, W. R. Flanagan, and Ida Rogers. Families sending children to this school were the Flynts, Yawns, Clarks, Stubbs, Mayfields and Keys.

RESOURCE

The WPA writings of Mrs. Nathan Rogers and Mrs. Jewel Boyd.

MISH

The village of Mish, just about 2 miles north of Ora on the G. and S.I. Railroad, seems to have been settled and prospering before the Mish Lumber Company settled in 1903. There was a Mish post office begun in 1895 with Martha F. Arrington as postmaster. Postmasters to follow were Mrs. Lillie C. Morgan, Lille C. M. Batton,

Walter L. Wright, Ollie L. Broome and William C. Rogers. Service was transferred to Arbo on September 30, 1906.

The Mish Company built a large sawmill that at one time worked as many as 150 men. The company had intended to buy more timber land, but when they failed to acquire this the mill was closed earlier than some in the area.

W. J. Brunt, the father of Vera Brunt Thurman and Theodore (Thedie) Brunt, was a section foreman at Mish. As his wife had died, he found it necessary to bring his young son, Thedie, to work with him until he remarried. When the mill closed he and his family moved to Collins.

RESOURCES:

Vera Brunt Thurman, the WPA research of an unknown writer, and a map of Covington County, dated 1900, courtesy of Mrs. Orland Lott.



This photo of the Mish Depot, located between Collins and Mount Olive, was taken in 1903. W. J. Brunt was foreman of Section No. 19 at the Mish Lumber Company there; he is shown on the extreme right. The boy on the hand cart is his son, Theodore (Thedie) B. Brunt. (Photo courtesy of Vera Brunt Thurman)

MOSCOS

The village of Moscos, located four miles south of Collins, was apparently established about 1890. A post office was begun in 1891, and there were possibly one or two stores.

In 1900, the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad came through, and the railroad, together with the turpentine industry, gave a boost to the little town for about eight years.

There are two stories about how the area got the name Moscos. One version says that Jim Kelly suggested the name since he sold so much Moscos Snuff at his nearby store.

Another version says that Prof. Alex Newton, head of the Zion Seminary from 1893-1894 and Superintendent of Covington County Schools from 1917-1928,

gave the name. He is said to have coined the word from two Latin words, "cos" and "mos," meaning "great things."

Whichever version you prefer, both are good stories.

MOSCOS POST OFFICE

The post office, located about 100 feet from the railroad track, opened on February 4, 1891, with James M. Kelly as the first postmaster. Those who followed were Joseph O. Napier, Jr., Thomas J. Walters, Homer Tindall, and Andrew Jack Shoemake. The office was closed on April 30, 1907, and the mail was sent to Kola.

MOSCOS SCHOOL

The Moscos School was located near the present homes of Harris Speed and Tom Abercrombie, just off the Willow Grove to

Seminary Road. The school, most likely, opened at about the same time as the post office, 1891. It was a three-room, three-teacher school serving grades 1-6. In 1928, the teachers were Willie Mae Kelly, Grace Cranford (Walker), and Palmae Graham.

Vondell Lee Dunagin and Winnie Mae Napier Jordan were in the third grade in 1928, the last year of the Moscos School. They were desk-mates, and Mrs. Jordan recalls that the desks were "so big that the two of us could sit inside our desk to sneak a snack during class."

Mrs. Dunagin walked the two miles to school and recalls that she had a great fear of crossing a footbridge on the way. Mrs. Jordan rode a bus to school, one of two buses in the area. Mrs. Jordan's father, Charlie Napier, drove the bus, picking up students in the communities of Eminence, Leggett and Night. He would leave students in grades 1-6 at Moscos and take the older children to Seminary School. In 1928 when the school closed, all the students were sent to Seminary School.

Mrs. R. C. (Ina) Thaxton was also a student at Moscos, and she remembers that two favorite parts of the school day were getting to play basketball and eating lunch.

Basketball was played outside on a dirt court and the teams would walk to neighboring schools for games. Many of the non-team member students would also attend the games to cheer the players.

Everyone brought their lunch to school, many in a syrup bucket. At lunch time everyone would hurry to a nearby hill where they would "open their lunches."

RESOURCES

Vondell Lee Dunagin, Winnie Mae Jordan, John Redmon, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Shoemake, Broox Sledge, Mrs. R. C. (Ina) Thaxton and the *History of Seminary* by Jerry Windsor.



These students posed for this Moscos School photo in 1922. The teacher of the group, Eddie Lott, is shown on the extreme left of the group. The school closed in 1928. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Earl Clark)

MOUNT CARMEL

Carl McIntire relates the story of the community of Mt. Carmel in an article in *The Clarion-Ledger/Jackson Daily News*, September 20, 1970.

Mt. Carmel is the town that was platted in Covington County, died after a comparatively short illness, and has been at rest in Jefferson Davis County for low these many years.

As strange as it may seem, it moved to Jeff Davis long after its death knell had sounded. That county was formed in 1906 out of what had been part of Covington County.

It was the home of Mt. Carmel Academy, a coeducational school that produced, in its short tenure, three men who gained a modicum of success: Dr. C. H. Ramsay, a medical doctor who served in the state legislature; Joe Mathison, who became sheriff and then chancery clerk of Covington; and the Rev. Lewis McInnis, who held pastorates of Presbyterian churches in Jackson, Nashville and Boston.

The academy was the first school of its class to be founded in southeast Mississippi, and was located in what was considered a scarcely settled area. Tuition was \$4 per month in one period of its spasmodic existence.

Founded sometime before 1830, it was established by John Ryan. When he died in 1832, school was suspended for a time, being revived in 1835 when three buildings were built and Rev. W. H. Taylor became the headmaster. He had the school incorporated May 13, 1837.

There were 70 to 80 students for the following two years and then, for a lack of teachers, it was suspended again for a few months. This time Robert C. Cohean reopened it in 1840 and in 1842 the reins were held by Rev. Azariah R. Graves, a Presbyterian.

In 1845 it was finally abandoned in favor of Zion Seminary which gave the name of Seminary to the town where it was located.

Mt. Carmel, the town, was the oldest settlement in what is now Jefferson Davis County and is listed in some of the records of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History as the home of several wealthy planters and merchants.

It was incorporated in 1835 and was officially unincorporated in 1904. (In the 1940 census the Mt. Carmel neighborhood listed 25 residents)

Simon Pfeiffer owned a store there and he moved to Brookhaven when the railroad went through the latter town. J. H. Williams moved his store to Prentiss about the same time.

Other than this, Mt. Carmel mentions in history are almost non-existent.

A plat of the town exists and it is pasted to a piece of cloth that has the word "lini-

ment" ornately inscribed on it. It may have been part of a sign. On the back is the record, "Plot of Mt. Carmel, Feb. 3, 1874."

On the front is this inscription: "A plan of Mt. Carmel on a scale of 100 ft. to an inch. Each lot containing 100 ft. square. Each street 60 ft. wide, as represented above, out of the 22nd and 23rd sections, 8th township. Laid out 4th March 1819 by John Ragan, Esq. Plan executed Nov. 4th, 1819 by I. Preston. This plan was continued and numbered from No. 33 inclusive by the undersigned E. S. Ragan Feb. 17th, 1835 West. The lots marked X were presented to those whose names are thereon by S. Fairchild Dec. 1835. A true copy, J. H. Mikell, Feb. 24, 1874."

Two springs are detailed in the large central square of the town and there are names inscribed on most of the 74 lots. The academy had the lot in the lower left hand corner.

Names included: J. B. Ragan, Serena Robertson, James Sanders, A. Stokes, E. S. Robertson, R. Jones, Dr. Magee, Dr. Gastman, F. A. Martin, Blunt, Fanchers, Graves, Rebeca Jones, W. B. Patterson, F. Benson, F. Holloway, Dr. Beavers. One lot was marked "for trees" and 26 lots had no names.

Streets were listed as: Marion, Prospect, Jackson, Spring and, as best they can be read, Mutins and Sone or Soul.

Early family names in the area were Pope, Williams, Holloway, McRaney, Rutledge, Hall, and Magee. Drs. Hall and Williams were early physicians to move to Mt. Carmel, and Dr. John L. Beavers and Dr. Bob Magee were early physicians that were reared in the community.

MT. CARMEL POST OFFICE

There was a daily mail route from Williamsburg to Monticello that passed through the town. The following are the

postmasters that served: Robert Jones, Oct. 28, 1826 to Nov. 22, 1834; Duncan Wilkinson, Nov. 22, 1834 to Feb. 11, 1837; M. A. Robertson, Feb. 11, 1837 to Oct. 17, 1837; Samuel Hemphill, Oct. 17, 1837 to May 28, 1839; Angus McLaurine, May 28, 1839 to Jan. 17, 1840; John Gartman, Jan. 17, 1840 to June 11, 1841; Elam Reggs, June 11, 1841 to Feb. 4, 1842; John B. Jones, Feb. 4, 1842 to Feb. 10, 1843; Alexander H. Hall, Feb. 10, 1843 to July 19, 1845; Elijah B. Harvey, July 19, 1845 to Feb. 26, 1846; William B. Holloway, Feb. 26, 1846 to May 30, 1848; John W. Deen, May 30, 1848 to July 31, 1849; William B. Holloway, July 31, 1849 to Jan. 9, 1850; John Storm, Jan. 9, 1850 to June 1, 1857; James M. White, June 1, 1857 to May 29, 1858; William H. Holloway, May 29, 1858 to May 18, 1866; John Garner, May 18, 1866 to July 28, 1871; H. H. Stewart, July 28, 1871 to Nov. 13, 1871; Milton Williams, Nov. 13, 1871 to Aug. 18, 1873; Duncan C. McRaney, Aug. 18, 1873 to Apr. 11, 1901; Henry C. Hall, Apr. 11, 1901 to Jan. 4, 1902; William B. Holloway, Jan. 4, 1902 to May 2, 1902; Thomas Pope, May 2, 1902 to Feb. 22, 1903; Lorenzo D. Posey, Feb. 22, 1903 to Nov. 29, 1904; Ella M. Nichols, Nov. 29, 1904 to July 20, 1905; Courtney E. Nichols, July 20, 1905 to July 2, 1906.

On July 2, 1906, postal records read that the office was "now in Jefferson Davis County."

RESOURCES

Ruth McInnis Breland; an article by Carl McIntire in the *Clarion-Ledger/Jackson Daily News* on September 20, 1970; the writings of an unknown WPA writer; and Broox Sledge's "History of Covington County Post Offices."

MOUNT HOREB

Liberty Baptist Church was providing a place of worship for a large area of the rural community, now known as Mount Horeb, in the 1890s. There was also a school, Union, that was located near the present home of Mrs. Theo Cauthen. Another school would later be named the Mount Horeb School.

POST OFFICES

The general area of Mount Horeb (southwest of Collins) was served by three post offices at various times. Strahan was located nine miles southwest of Collins, and was formed in 1866 when U. S. Strahan moved to this site and established a water mill. At one time the place boasted a school, store and the post office.

About one mile from the Union School was the **Thames** Post Office. This was in the home of Tom Thames from September 6, 1883-June 15, 1906. When service was discontinued in 1906, mail was carried to some homes by rural carriers traveling by horse and buggy. It was in 1959 that mail was delivered to every home.

Another post office in the area was **Jonah**. Jonah was 12 miles southwest of Collins and was established in 1900 when John Chance built a store and secured a post office for the community.

Serving as postmasters at Jonah were John Chance, January 25, 1901-December 23, 1903; Mary C. Chance, December 23, 1903-August 15, 1904; and Doctor L. Harrellson, August 15, 1904-March 31, 1905. After 1905, mail service was changed to Terrell, a nearby post office.

MOUNT HOREB BAPTIST CHURCH

In 1895, there arose a need for a new church building at Liberty Church and some of the members wanted to rebuild at the same location. However, some of the members wanted to build the church closer to the Union School. Since they could not all agree, those who lived in what is now the Mount Horeb Community met at the school in April of 1895 to discuss beginning a new church.

The organization took place on June 9, 1895, with seventeen charter members. Rev. Ed Robertson was the first pastor (his salary was \$50 a year) and some of the organizers were Cullen Aultman, Thomas N. Bullock, D. L. Bullock, Tom Thames, T. R. Eaton, and J. G. Smith. A building was erected on the school campus and services were held on the first Saturday and Sunday of each month.

A complete history of the church has been written by Mrs. Pauline McGrew and some of the events follow:

- 1900 (circa)—Repairs were made on the building, an organ was bought, the pastor's salary was raised to \$65 a year and contributions were made to Home and Foreign Missions.

- 1920s—The church made donations to tornado victims in Willow Grove Com-

munity, to Collins Baptist Church when it was destroyed by a tornado, to many families who had bad luck from sickness or a fire, and to Mississippi College.

- 1922—Rev. F. W. Varner, a student at Mississippi College, became pastor. Members of the church transported him to and from the depot at either Collins or Seminary so he could conduct services on the weekends that services were held.

- 1926—The ladies of the church sold chickens and donated the proceeds to repair part of the church and to build a choir loft.

- 1937—Ann Hughes and Minnie Thames organized a women's group that soon developed into a Women's Missionary Union.

- 1934—The ladies again raised money to buy pews. When the men decided to make the pews themselves, the ladies used their money to build two outside restrooms.

- 1939—A ten-day sing was held before the revival.

- 1943—David Thames sent some of his military money home to be used to start a building fund for the church.

- 1949—The building was begun with members donating much of the materials and labor.



Minnie Bullock (with spade) and her sister Mary Bullock were charter members of the Mount Horeb Baptist Church when it was organized in 1895. When ground was broken for a new church building in 1950 they were asked to do the honors. They were known in the community as Aunt Minnie and Aunt Mary. (Photo courtesy of Pauline McGrew)



This was the first Mt. Horeb Baptist Church building. The church was organized in 1895 and this building was built soon afterwards. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Pauline McGrew)

- 1952—The Junior Class started a church library with pennies they had saved for several years.

- 1956—A pastorium was begun and finished in 1959.

- 1964—The Ellisville State School Choir provided a musical program for the church.

Today the church continues a long standing emphasis on missions and provides learning opportunities for all ages in this area. A music program for pre-schoolers through adults is also provided, as is a yearly Vacation Bible School.

In recent years the church has had a friendly competition with the Lone Star Baptist Church to see which church could win the attendance banner at the annual M Night meeting (a promotional meeting for Church Training groups in this county). In the fall of 1984, the current pastor, Rev. Phillip Duncan, said if the church won this year he would "preach on top of the church." Well, they did and he did. There was a record attendance on that November Sunday afternoon.

RESOURCES

Information was obtained from Pauline McGrew and *The History of Seminary* by Jerry Windsor.

NEW HOPE

The New Hope Community in southwest Covington County was one of the earliest settlements in the county. It was established on the banks of the Bowie River (called Bone Creek on some old maps), about 1830.

The Bowie River heads in the northeast corner of Jeff Davis County. It flows southeastward, forming a dividing line between Covington and Jeff Davis Counties, across the southern corner of Covington, merging with the Okatoma in Forrest County, and then to the Leaf River at Petal.

The fertile soil along its banks and the adjacent good grazing lands were main inducements for the early settlers. The river was teaming with fish which made getting daily food somewhat simpler.

RICHMOND

The river was also used for power for grist mills and saw mills. Richmond Watts saw this as an advantage when he settled in 1830 in what is now called the New Hope Community. Watts set up the first band-saw in Covington County.

A small town called Richmond grew up around the mill and between 1850 and 1910 there were three stores, two gins, two doctors (Bethea and Tisdale) and a post office.

The post office opened on October 23, 1879 with Francis M. Watts as the first postmaster. Other postmasters to follow were Henry R. Curtis, January 15, 1880 to January 29, 1889; office closed January 29, 1889 and reopened November 29, 1889; Martha Watts, November 29, 1889 to August 17, 1892; closed from August 17, 1892 to April 23, 1894; Stephen D. Patrick, April 23, 1894 to March 21, 1895; Reuben Watts, March 21, 1895 to September 1, 1899; James N. Graham, September 1, 1899 to January 30, 1904; Isaac U. Barr, January 30, 1904 to March 4, 1904; and Presley Watts, March 4, 1904 to June 15, 1905. The office was permanently closed on June 15, 1905 with the mail being sent to Sumrall.

The building of two nearby railroads was apparently the reason for the demise of Richmond. The Gulf and Ship Island was built some five miles to the east and the Mississippi Central Railroad about the same distance to the west.

Richmond remains today as the name of the voting precinct in the area. The home of Dr. Bethea, one of the early settlers, can still be seen and some effort has been made in recent years to repair parts of it.

The Bowie, while not as popular as the Okatoma for recreation, is a beautiful river with some very high banks, toward the lower end. The river has no municipalities located on its banks and as such has no wastes coming in to pollute its waters.

CHURCHES

The first church in the Richmond area was New Hope Baptist Church. It was organized on October 26, 1833 and the first building was a log cabin located on a high hill one mile south of the present location. This building soon became inadequate, and Bro. F. M. Watts donated land for the church and cemetery on the banks of Bowie River. (On some maps the Bowie is spelled Bouie.)

The second church building, also of logs, stood near the center of what is now the church cemetery. This building was destroyed by fire in 1880, and a third building, of rough lumber, was built and used until 1907. The fourth building, built in 1907, was destroyed by a tornado on Christmas Eve night in 1945.

The destructive tornado is still remembered by many residents. Mrs. Vergia Watts Girley recalls that "all that was left of the church was the floor." Four or five houses were also destroyed and three people were killed.

Owen C. Girley recalls that "two sleeping children were picked up, bed and all, and dropped down in the yard." The children were unharmed, but the house was destroyed.

The church was rebuilt for the fifth time and this building remains today, but with several additions and renovations.

Some of the early families of the church were Watts, Lott, Aultman, and Norris. Other families who moved in somewhat later included Bethea, Tisdale, Batson, Dale, Lee, Lowery, Miller, Rayborn and Wiggins.

The Wiggins family had no boys, but they had twelve girls. The girls married and made their homes in the community and because there were no male heirs the name of Wiggins has disappeared from the community.

Pastors of the church include: Bro. Fairchilds, Bro. Jimmy Johnson, Bro. Walker,

Bro. Finley, Bro. Edd Robinson, Bro. Norvell Robertson, Jr., Bro. Joe Bryant, Bro. Reed, Bro. Hugh Graham, Bro. Shepard, Bro. J. P. Williams, Bro. Davis, Bro. Rufus Langum, Bro. Rich Murry, Bro. Fulton, Bro. M. O. Patterson, Bro. A. L. O'Bryan, Bro. Luther Watts, Bro. Robert Gandy, Bro. John Watts, Bro. Watkins, Bro. Tom Dale, Bro. N. J. Derrick, Bro. Mize, Bro. Jeff Lott, Bro. Abner Bryant, Bro. Bruce Hilbun, Bro. N. G. Lee, Bro. Caney Clark, Bro. Roy Clark, Bro. F. M. Claunch, Rev. Jack Cranford, Rev. Troy Sumrall, Rev. T. F. Stroud, Rev. D. Wade Smith, Rev. V. O. Malley, Rev. Alex Abercrombie, Rev. C. S. Moulder, Rev. Ken Sumrall, Rev. Billy Ingram, Rev. A. E. Allmon, Rev. W. R. Lane and Rev. Delton Craft.

New Hope, as one of the oldest Baptist churches in the area, has had many of its members go into the ministry. Some of these are Louis Davis, Paul David Aultman, George Gerald Aultman, Burl Patterson, Gerald Lee Aultman, Dale Patterson, Tubby Broome, J. W. Warren, Orel Patterson, Mike Whiddon, Raymond Smith, Roy Davis, Mike Lee, Bolivar Allman, Franklin Easterling, Franklin Lott, Sonny Aultman and Mary Lillian Lott Aultman, a missionary.

In the early days of the community there was no church for black residents of the area. Many times they would come to the pastor of New Hope to have him baptize them in Bowie River. As late as the 1940s, there was a portion of the New Hope Church set aside for Black worshippers.

Possibly around 1900, a black church, Bethlehem, was organized and a building erected one-half mile from New Hope Church on Mill Creek. The church is a well-kept attractive building and its members come from a wide area to attend. There is a quartet associated with the church called the Bethlehem Travelers.



The New Hope Baptist Church, organized in 1833, is one of the oldest churches in the area. Located on the banks of the Bowie River in southwest Covington County, the present building was erected in 1946 to replace the building destroyed by a tornado on Christmas Eve, 1945. (Photo courtesy of Betty Stephens)

SCHOOLS

The New Hope School is thought to have been organized at about the same time as the church, 1833. The school met in the first three church buildings. A separate two-room building was built in 1911, and grades 1-9 were taught there. Some of the teachers at New Hope were Carrie Pridgen, Alonzo Warren and a Mr. Scott.

The school closed in 1927 and for one year the students attended Pineville School. In 1928 there was a consolidation of schools throughout the county and the students went to Sumrall.

Other schools in the general vicinity were Providence (northeast of New Hope), Pineville (on the east side of Bowie River), Graham (up river from New Hope), Byrdtown (on the west side of Bowie River), and Caneyhead (located close to Smyrna Church).

Mrs. Melvin Bullock was a student at Providence and she recalls that it was a three-room school. Some of the teachers she remembers were Bill Lott, Maggie Aultman, Marie Bynum and Ozzie Lott.

RESOURCES

WPA writings of Maggie Pittman, December 3, 1938; "The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge, 1955; Betty Stephens, Everett C. Beasley; Vergia Watts Girley; Owen C. Girley; Wilmer Lowery; Mrs. Melvin Bullock; Mr. and Mrs. Sam Herrin, Bob Hamill; Dianne Speed and Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Robertson.

OAKTOMIE (OKATOMA)

Oaktomie is listed in the United States postal records as the site of the third post office in Covington County. No information is given regarding the location of the office, but it is possible that it was in the lower part of the county where the Okatoma and the Bowie rivers flow together. The reason for this conjecture is that a family of Granberrys were among the first settlers, with Norvell Robertson, of that area, and the first postmaster was Loammi Granberry. He served from December 7, 1832 to December 30, 1833 and was followed by William Leggett, December 30, 1833 to September 17, 1835. The office was discontinued on September 17, 1835 and never re-opened.

RESOURCES

"The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge, and the autobiography of Norvell Robertson.

ORA

As the 20th century opened, the United States was enjoying a period of prosperity, industrialism and social change. To quote a favorite saying of the times, "Everything that wasn't nailed down was coming loose."

More than one third of the nation was living in cities; manufacturing was replacing farming as a major source of income and big business was swallowing small business. About 8,000 passenger automobiles shared some 150,000 miles of surfaced roads with innumerable horse-drawn vehicles. For all the progress, however, an epidemic of yellow fever broke out in New Orleans in July of 1905 and some 400 deaths occurred before the outbreak was controlled by an anti-mosquito campaign.

The adolescent nation was beginning to "feel her oats" and was becoming more involved in international politics. Alaska, Hawaii and the Philippines were now territories and we bravely called for war with the Spanish after the sinking of the Maine.

One reason for this awakening as a world power was that the Civil War and the Reconstruction were finally behind us, the work force was working and the railroads were running. The railroad trackage totaled about 193,000 miles in 1900.

THE RAILROAD REACHES COVINGTON COUNTY

Covington County was having her own growth spurt due to the coming of the Gulf and Ship Island (G & S. I.) Railroad in 1898. The tracks generally followed the course of the Okatoma Creek and the Dixie Highway (later US 49).

Where once there had been sleepy hamlets surrounded by a scattering of farms there were now booming mill towns as lumber companies came to harvest the vast virgin timber in the Piney Woods. The lumber companies brought in complete towns in what seemed an overnight venture.

One such little village that was changed was Duckworth (later to be called Ora). It would seem that about 1814 Joe Duckworth obtained the first land grant in the area. A description of his home was written by Ruby Huff Jordan in the 1930s after an interview with his daughter, Kitty, then 80 years old.

"The lumber for the house was cut by Webster's old sash-saw mill, the first mill to be erected in Covington County (early 1800s). The mill served as a cotton gin, flour mill, corn mill as well as a saw mill. The floors and walls of the house were made of tongue and groove lumber and the joints were joggled and other connections were pegged with hickory pegs."

Miss Kitty described the house thus, "The dear old box could be rolled down this hill by a cyclone and never a plank would be knocked out of place for Pa certainly knew how to fix things right."

The location of the Duckworth house at the intersection of US 49 and the Raleigh and Williamsburg Mail Road was handy for travelers. It was nicknamed "The Hotel" because of the many visitors who stopped.

Food was always plentiful at the table and the boards were said to squeak under the weight of hash, hominy, hams, collards, dried fruit pies, homemade wheat bread, possum, yams, and whatever else was in season. Miss Kitty explained about



This is the only remaining building from the Tallahala Lumber Company that brought prosperity to the town of Ora. This was the office building and is said to have dispensed as much as \$80,000 in payroll. The building is presently the private residence of the Gwinn Rush family. (Photo by Gwen Keys Hitt)

the ones who prepared the food, "Pa wern't a believer of slaves so us girls did the cooking and cooked it good too, cause Ma and Pa see'd to that."

THE COMING OF THE MILLS

The first saw mill at Duckworth is thought to have been built by a local lumberman, C. J. Gray. Little is known of this mill, but memories abound about the second mill that was built about 1900, the Tallahala Lumber Company.

The Tallahala built houses for the families of their workers and according to Mrs. Minnie McDonald "they were built out of the very best heart pine." The main office for the company still stands at the railroad crossing in Ora. (It is currently a private residence.) The office dispensed a payroll of as much as \$80,000. Across the road from the large two-story office was the company commissary. It is said that they sold a little of everything and would even deliver.

William Carr, son of the Ora postmaster, recalls that a driver with a horse and wagon would come by with the groceries, presumably ordered by the husband of the family on his way to work. The horse was quite familiar with his job and with how long it was supposed to take for the driver to make his deliveries. If the driver took too long the horse would simply take himself back to the shed behind the commissary.

The company also built a large two-story framed building to be used as a school, located north of the present Billups Station. Three teachers were employed. Some of the early teachers were Miss Corine Kervin, Miss Mattie Allred and Carl McLeod. The school closed in 1929.

Three or four stores were in the town of 700. A Mr. McKeithen had a store across the street from the school and William Carr had a store and combination post office. (More on the post office later.)

FUGITIVE CAUSED AT LEAST TWO DEATHS

The other store was run by W. T. Johns. An exciting and saddening story is told of the shooting of Mr. Johns in 1912 during a robbery attempt. Seymour Arnold was a fugitive after having robbed a candy wagon in Hattiesburg. He escaped on the north bound train and stopped in Ora. He first stole a watch from a Mr. Roseberry's pocket while he slept in the local boarding house. His next stop was the John's store. Mr. Johns cornered Arnold and Arnold shot him in the arm. Mr. Johns was not killed, but the effect of the loss of blood and the shock of the episode are said to have caused him an early death.

Arnold escaped then to Collins, stole quietly into the house of France Lowry and killed Willie Lowry before any of the family could go to his aid.

Arnold escaped once more and took \$40.00 in cash from the home of Jessie Ainsworth in Taylorsville. He was finally caught under the water tank of the G. M. & N. Railroad at Stringer, Mississippi.

Mrs. Minnie McDonald recalls that he was later tried and hanged. The hanging took place in the general vicinity of the current county school bus barn. The sheriff is said to have cut up the rope used to hang him into little pieces and to have thrown the pieces to the crowd.

Mrs. McDonald also recalls that the Tallahala Lumber Company doctor was Dr. W. W. Davis. His services were free to the workers and their families as his wages were taken out of the wages of the workers. When the mill closed he moved to Collins to practice.

The town also had a so-called "cow doctor." Ed Biglane was called by the local farmers to give aid and remedies to any ailing animals.

A first for the town of Ora was Pat Smith's car. This being the only car that many of the citizens had ever seen, it caused quite a bit of excitement. Mrs. McDonald recalls that Smith was generous enough to give her and some of her young friends a spin in the new-fangled contraption.

Mrs. McDonald also recalls that the "highlight of the day was to go to the railroad track at six o'clock and watch the train go through to Hattiesburg." Many times the train was loaded with soldiers on their way to Camp Shelby. The onlookers could hear the soldiers singing as the train went on its way.

There were two large hotels in Ora at one time, one for whites and one for blacks. Mrs. McDonald remembers the night that the hotel for blacks burned. "It was so light that we could see a pin on our back porch," she said.



Seymour Arnold, an escaped convict, struck a chord of fear in the lives of Covington Countians in 1912 when he wounded Mr. W. T. Johns in Ora and later killed Willie Lowry in Collins. He was later tried and hanged in the general vicinity of the present county school bus barn. This photo was taken just before the hanging on February 10, 1913. (Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Sanford)

AUNT JANE, A FORTUNE TELLER

A WPA writer in the 30s recorded the following account of an interesting citizen of Ora named Aunt Jane. Aunt Jane lived on the Sunset Road which goes through Ora, and she was said to possess special powers for seeing into the past and the future.

A Mr. Dixon from near Reddoch's Ferry lost a prized pearl handled pistol and went to Aunt Jane. Before he could explain his plight she replied, "Honey, don't you worry you'll get your gun back." She detailed everything about when it was missed, told him who had gotten it and that it was buried. She told him that it would be returned to him on his front porch. It is said to have occurred just that way in about six months time.

Aunt Jane's was a popular place for young people to go on a Sunday afternoon to look into their future. She would have them blow into a cup and then she would "read what she saw in the cup."

She had very long hair that she wore on top of her head. She told one patron that her wisdom came from her hair, like Samson's strength came from his hair.

ORA POST OFFICE

The first Ora post office was located near the Salem Baptist Church, across what is now called Ora Swamp. The post office was in the home of Mattie Washington Carter Rogers and her husband, George Washington Rogers. Mrs. Rogers was the postmaster from 1890 to 1899. The word Ora is said to be French for prayer. The name was given by an aged pioneer of Salem, Dock Rogers.

The thriving town of Duckworth petitioned for a post office in 1899 and the postal service said that the Ora post office could be moved there. The first postmaster at the new location was J. C. Tannehill. Mr. Tannehill resigned after a few months and the job went to William M. Carr. The post office was located in Mr. Carr's store. He served from April 1900 until the office was closed in July 1922.

THE BEGINNING OF ORA BAPTIST CHURCH

As more and more people moved into the little town around 1900, church services were held in the school with the Methodist and Baptist ministers alternating. The present Ora Baptist Church was organized on April 10, 1904, with 26 charter members. They were J. W. Speed, M. C. Speed, Earl Speed, Katie Speed, Louise Holifield, O. L. Benway, J. C. Rogers, Mrs. J. C. Rogers, J. M. Rogers, Robert Rogers, Sam Rogers, Miss Esther Rogers, Mrs. Emma Biglane, J. W. Thornton, R. L. Martin, Sara Hausey, A. Hausey, John Eitel, H. A.

Haynes, Miss Leona Eitel, James Prestige, E. E. Burns, Mrs. E. E. Burns, V. F. Duckworth, Willie Duckworth and John Prestidge.

The first pastor was Rev. T. D. Bush. The church dissolved in 1923 due to the fact that the sawmill and lumber business closed. Many of the members moved to Salem Baptist Church.

Fifteen years later, in September of 1938, the late Rev. Reese Rogers assisted in reorganizing the church.

The present building is the only one ever built by the congregation, but it has been enlarged and renovated several times. The church is currently seeking to have a steeple added to the picturesque white frame building.

LITTLE REMAINS OF THE LUMBER TOWNS

The railroad still runs along the same tracks today, but the trains are going much too fast to see anyone in them and certainly there are no soldiers to be heard singing.

Ora has recently been annexed into Collins and is the location for the Waters Trucking Company and the Rutland Lumber Company. The lovely old church and the two-story Tallahala Lumber Company office building are the only reminders of the thriving little mill town. The boom is over, but the memory remains.

RESOURCES

Minnie Lee McDonald, the WPA writings of Ruby Huff Jordan, Mr. and Mrs. William Carr, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Reese Rogers, Polly Gatewood, Myrtle Massengale, Mrs. James Arrington, Vera Brunt Thurman, Maxine Biglane Rutland, Roanoke Rogers Keys, Clifton Keys, and *The Bicentennial Almanac*, by Calvin D. Linton.



The Rutland Lumber Company is shown in the background of the Ora Cemetery. The lumber company is the only reminder of the heyday of the timber business in Ora.



The Ora Baptist Church was organized on April 10, 1904 and this building was erected shortly thereafter. The church disbanded in 1923 due to the lumber mill closing and so many members moving away, but it was reorganized in 1938. While the church has had several additions and renovations, this building is still the original one. (Photo by Gwen Hitt)

ORANGEBURG

The only information known about Orangeburg is from the United States postal records as researched by Broox Sledge.

"Stephen Wilkins or Wilkes, Jan. 23, 1832 to 1833.

There was no further entry for this office and no reason noted in the record as to why. An old map shows Orangeburg in the extreme northern edge of Marion county only a small distance from the Covington county line. It could be that this entry was merely made in error and was never corrected in the record. There is another possibility. I strongly suspect Orangeburg was merely an early name for Wilkesburg although I have no record of that. I do know that on separate maps they seem to be extremely close together and I have not seen a map with both offices on it. Just another part of the past to be forever secret."

RESOURCE

"The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

PICKERING

Pickering was begun and named in 1901, when a flag stop on the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad was established on the land of John Pickering, four miles south of Seminary. A flag stop was anywhere you could "flag down" the train and board.

In 1906, a portable sawmill began operation there, but it ran for only a few years.

The post office was begun in 1901. The postmasters and their dates of service are Martin C. Harmon, February 14, 1901 to August 19, 1902; Kezziah H. Morris, August 19, 1902 to August 28, 1902; Kezziah H. Morris, August 28, 1902 to November 29, 1904; James H. Bryant, November 29, 1904 to (date unreadable).

The post office was probably discontinued around 1907. The community became extinct in 1928.

RESOURCES

History of Seminary, Mississippi by Jerry Windsor, and "The Post Office History of Covington County" by Broox Sledge.

PINNELLVILLE

The location for Pinnellville, on a map dated 1900, is due east of Collins, just across the Tallahoma Creek in what is now Jones County.

The post office opened there on January 9, 1850, with Richard Pinnell as postmaster. He was followed by James M. Evans, April 9, 1850 to June 10, 1852. A notation in the United States postal records, dated June 10, 1852, reads, "Now in Jones County."

RESOURCES

A map dated 1900, used courtesy of Mrs. Orland Lott, and "The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

POWELL

The extinct post office of Powell was located in the northwestern part of the county between the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad and Bowie Creek.

The postmasters were as follows: A. Richfield McGilvray, Mar. 5, 1894 to Jan. 29, 1901; Woodie A. Calhoun, Jan. 29, 1901 to May 25, 1905; Atticus A. Calhoun, May 25, 1905 to Feb. 28, 1907. Discontinued Feb. 28, 1907 — mail to Mt. Olive.

RESOURCES

A map dated 1900, used courtesy of Mrs. Orland Lott, and "The Post Office History of Broox Sledge."

PROVIDENCE

PROVIDENCE BAPTIST CHURCH

The history of Providence Baptist Church states that the "church was built on the principle of the individual's freedom to worship and the pursuit of love, liberty and happiness for all." The name "Providence" was chosen for the church because the founding members believed that they were following the "divine will of God by forming the church."

In the 1800s, several black families began to move into the area where Providence Church is located (just north of Highway 588, about three miles east of Collins). These were hard-working families and the men sought whatever jobs were available to them, such as farming, timbering and building.

Many of these early families were, at that time, travelling several miles to continue to worship at the Shady Oak Missionary Baptist Church located almost at the Jones County line on Highway 84 East. A meeting was called and held under a shade tree to discuss building a church closer to their homes.

The first place of worship was a brush arbor and was near that shade tree. The names of some of those founding families were Coats, Eastlin, Hawthorn, Leggett, McGills, Rayborn, Smith and Wheeler.

Since that first temporary brush arbor, there have been five church buildings. The construction of the fourth building was begun when the soldiers returned from World War II. Bro. G. B. Booth was the carpenter, Melvin Page was his assistant, and there was an abundance of free labor from church members.

Sister Dolly Rayborn, a church deaconess at the time, stated that "this is the last church we will need." By the mid-1960s, however, there was already a need for a new building. Rev. S. L. Johnson was the spark behind this movement, and by 1967 the new church was completed. It wasn't long before all the indebtedness was paid.

The list of pastors for the church is as follows: Jimmy Brown, Issam Brown, Johnnie Barnes, George Booth, Jim Hage, W. R. Hamilton, S. L. Johnson, and R. C. Hicks.

Deacons that have served the church are F. S. Posey, H. D. Barnett, Julius Hawthorn, J. T. Monroe, Sam Rayborn, Rich Leggett, Buddy Smith, Issac Hawthorne, Willie V. Magee, Roscoe Magee, F. C. Coats, Maxie Rayborn, Braxton Booth, L. B. Leggett, I. H. Hawthorn, Johnnie Leggett, Judge Fairley, Paul Washington, Larry Wheeler, and W. V. McGee.

Officers for the church year 1985 are as follows: Br. H. C. Hicks, pastor; Sister Gene Washington, clerk; I. H. Hawthorn, deacon board chairman; Paul Washington, superintendent of Sunday School; Larry Wheeler, assistant superintendent of Sunday School; Maxie Rayborn, board of trustees' chairman; Judge Fairley, trustee; F. D. Coats, trustee; W. V. McGee, treasurer; Sister Mattie Hicks, choir director; Sister Easter Leggett, choir president; Sister Celestine Woullard, pianist; Sister Naomi Hawthorn, Home Mission President.

The church history concludes that "out of this small community have come teachers, craftsmen, welders, beauticians, barbers, supervisors and oil well workmen. The effect of Providence Church is felt all across America because of the loyalty these members take with them to their distant jobs. We have come this far by faith and we pray that God will continue to smile on Providence Baptist Church."

RESOURCES

The History of Providence Baptist Church, written by Evelyn McCann Wheeler with Willie V. Magee.

ROCK HILL (North)

Rock Hill, located just west of Highway 49, between Collins and Mount Olive, was settled about 1894 and was named by Mr. and Mrs. Tobe Anderson because of a rocky hill north of the Baptist church. The life of the community was, and still is, centered primarily around the church. The church was organized in 1894 in the Rock Hill School building. The first place of worship was built by Henry Hosey. This building burned in 1905 and it was soon rebuilt by George Stuckey. The present building was erected in 1948 with several additions and renovations during the following years.

The first members of the church were the families of Arthur Rogers, Norvelle Rogers, Lauren McQueen, King Byrd, P. C. Coulter, Sr., Bud Hampshire, Bill Duckworth, Charlie Smith, Z. A. Rogers, Benjamin Rogers, and Tobe Arrington.

There was once a post office in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Tobe Arrington. One source states that there was once an office named Tobe in Covington County. This may have been the same office. It was opened on June 4, 1901, but the order was rescinded on August 29, 1901.

The Rock Hill School closed about 1931 or 1932, but the church has remained an active and vital part of the rural community. The church has had two pastoriums. The first was built in 1958 and sold in 1971 with a new pastorium being built in 1972.

RESOURCES

Mrs. Adrian (Gladys) Kelly, and Broox Sledge.

ROCK HILL (South)

The history of the Rock Hill Community is basically the history of the church and the school located there. The community is located in the lower southwestern part of the county where Lamar, Covington and Jeff Davis Counties meet.

The early records of the Rock Hill Missionary Baptist Church were lost to fire, so much of the history is left to the memories of some of the older members.

Mrs. Jessie Graham Riles moved to the area some 75 years ago and she recalls that the church was already organized and a building was erected about two years later. The school, teaching grades 1-8, was also there and was called the Clark School. The last building was a three-room structure and was about 200 yards from the present church. The school closed in about 1935. Some of the teachers as recalled by Dewitt Clark were C. J. Pridgen (principal), Della Rogers, Victoria Graham, John Redmon and B. F. Jordan.

The Rock Hill Church today has a membership of approximately 175 and meets in a building built in 1941, with several renovations and additions to the building since then.

RESOURCES

Mrs. Jessie Graham Riles, Esma Graham Canfield, Dewitt Clark, and Hayden Stephens.

SALEM COMMUNITY

The narrow Rogers Creek that winds its way through the Salem Community just east of Collins has long been a life-sustaining part of the community. It is generally agreed that one of the first settlers on this creek was Shadrack Rogers, a Revolutionary soldier. Some other early families in the community were the Pickering, Speeds, Jordans, Duckworths, Spells, Deeses and Williamsons. These families probably began to move to the area from the Carolinas between 1825 and 1850.

The land they homesteaded was first home to the Choctaw Indians. Evidence of their camps can still be found along parts of the creek. The creek begins at a spring head and is only a few miles long.

However, it was an important part of the life of the Indians. Because the water was fresh and cold it was an ideal location for their camps. The creek also flows into the larger Okatoma at Collins which made canoe transportation easier. It was along its banks that the Indians found the flint needed to make their arrowheads and tools, and it was in its dark pools that they found fish for food.

EARLY CEMETERIES

The early white settlers began clearing plots for farming along these same banks. They built their homes and began to plant gardens and fruit orchards. The first graveyard was also near the creek. The Meshack Rogers Cemetery is on land owned by Howard Jordan today and it is believed to be the final resting place of Meshack's father, Shadrack. There are approximately 22 graves in this cemetery and most carry the names of Rogers, Duckworth, Speed, and Dease. The earliest date on a marker is December 1838, the death of Elizabeth Lucy Brunson Rogers, the first wife of Meshack.

Another old cemetery in the community is the Norvel Rogers Cemetery located on land owned by Jake Winfield. The six graves there are all the family of Norvel Rogers.



This is the Clark School (Rock Hill Community in the southwest part of the county) boys' basketball team for 1928-1929. The team members are (from left to right) Jessie Pierce, Elmo Broome, Virgil Russell, John Redmon (coach), Elmer Barnes, William Patterson, and Toxie Daughtrey. The next year these players transferred to Sumrall School and won the state tournament two out of the next three years. (Photo courtesy of John Redmon)

ROGERS SCHOOL

It was along the banks of the Rogers Creek that the first school was built. Like other community schools in the county, the Rogers School was one room with no windows and no chimney. It is said that the cracks between the logs gave light enough for the pupils to read. Those who apparently organized the school were D. C. Rogers, James Williamson, T. H. Jordan, George Washington Rogers, J. F. Thames, C. E. Thames, N. M. Rogers and B. I. Leggett.

This humble beginning started a tradition of pride in the community school and a strong belief that education is important. The first teachers were anyone in the community who could read and write, and they took turns teaching, probably by the month.

According to an interview with Dan Rogers in 1937, this first school was torn down (the exact location is unknown) and the school moved to the Norvel Rogers place. This second school was also a log house, with a stick and dirt chimney. The school term was increased from two to four months. The two extra months could now be held in the winter since heat was available.

Some of the early teachers were William Sheppard, Jim Hill and Henry Edmonson. Some of the pupils in this second school were Dan, George, Marion, Shack and Luther Rogers, Francis Welch, Jim Welch and Fred Spell.

SALEM SCHOOL

Until 1913 the school remained at approximately the location of the Salem Baptist Church today. It is unknown when the name of the school was changed from Rogers to Salem, but it could have been in 1874 when the church was organized in the school building. The church was named Salem after the Salem, South Carolina that had been home to some of the first settlers.

In 1913 the school was moved to what is now known as the Salem School Road. A large two-story frame building was erected and made into a high school. Several smaller schools were consolidated into Salem at this time. This was a progressive step since it is believed that in 1900 there were from 60-75 little schools in Covington County, or about one every 3 to 4 miles.

In 1915 wagons and buggies were being used to transport some of the students. The wagons had a type of canvas top with canvas windows that could be rolled down in bad weather. Some thoughtful mothers would heat bricks for their traveling children to put at their feet during cold weather. These mule drawn wagons would occasionally have to be stopped on steep hills and the students unloaded for the climb. Lunches were brought from home in either a sack or a syrup can.



These 27 young people participated in the first Girls' Auxiliary (GA) coronation service held at Salem Baptist Church in 1956. The present church building was under construction at the time and this recognition service was held in the auditorium of the Salem High School. (Photo courtesy of Roanoke Rogers Keys)

The Guthrie Primer was an important book for the beginning students and each student purchased his own. During the 1920s these books were sold at Earl McRaney's store in Collins (now OTASCO).

In 1928 there was another consolidation, bringing in Station Creek, Leaf River, Willow Grove and possibly other schools. The trustees at that time were Wilmer I. Rogers, Dolph Pickering, Jim Todd, and R. T. Wade.

New school buildings were again erected in 1949 with two brick wings joined by a large auditorium. There were approximately 325 students at this time. The principal was Harlan Stubbs and some of the teachers were Miss Willie Mae Edmonson, Mrs. Homa Thompson, Mrs. Arlis Pridgen, Mrs. Victor Mayfield, Mrs. Helen Rogers, Mrs. Naomi Stubbs, Mrs. Walter Huff, Mr. Harvey Carter, and Mr. W. C. Harvey. The trustees were Troy Wade, Bura Mitchell, Clifton Keys, Burlon Rogers and Jim Tisdale.

The students by this time had a lunch-room available, a large library, home economics and vocational classes, a very active 4-H Club and basketball. The basketball games were the social events of the community and the teams were fiercely competitive, winning many trophies.

This relatively new building burned in the fall of 1957. The long line of trophies was on the top shelf of the library and were visible that night in the firelight that consumed them.

Grades 1-8 remained during the rest of that school year using other buildings on the campus. In the fall of 1958 Salem was closed permanently and the students consolidated, once again, this time to the recently built Collins High School.

SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH

While the Salem School is no more, the church that began on June 13, 1874, in the first school building remains a vital force in the community. Rev. W. E. Sheppard, the first pastor, began a line of 28 preachers to follow.

Charter members were Brothers John T. Deese, John Pickering, J. T. Duckworth, Norvel Rogers, Sr., George W. Rogers, James Williamson, Wiley P. Jordan and Charles C. Sheppard and Sisters Elizabeth Deese, Charity Williamson, M. M. Sheppard, Minnie J. Duckworth, Jane Duckworth, Susan E. Jordan, Sophronie Sheppard, Melissa Ward, Mahala Pickering, Hester Hill, Louise Webster, N. C. Webster, Mary L. Webster, Keziah Rogers and Keziah Speed.

The last of the charter members, George W. Rogers, died November 5, 1921.

The first church building was erected in 1877 from split logs and was one room with six windows. The second building (white frame 40 x 60 ft.) was constructed in 1895. Additions were continued on this building until in the 1940s, it had an auditorium to seat 500 with seven large assembly rooms, 17 classrooms, a church library, musical instruments in the assembly rooms and auditorium and a social center called the Community Hut.

The Hut was built in 1934 with funds collected by the T.E.L. (Timothy, Eunice, Lois) Sunday School Class. Mrs. Houston Rogers (Moselle) was the teacher of the class and Mrs. Olin Spell recalls that the class put on a play, "Mother's Moment," at Salem School to make money for the project.

Mrs. Spell also recalls that the wedding reception of her daughter, Vivian Eve, to Bobby Magee was the first reception held in the hut. Family and friends pitched in with the sewing of clothes, the baking of the cake, the decorating of the church and hut. Mrs. Spell says, "The whole wedding cost \$1.50 for a bouquet of glads (gladioli)."

Native son, the Rev. Reese Rogers, was pastor of the church from 1938-1949. During these years the church enrollment in Sunday School was 300 and the enrollment in Training Union was 200. God's Acre Plan was used to obtain funds above the tithe. The enlarged church and, later, the first pastorium were partially funded through the farmers giving the profit from one acre of their crops. In 1949 Rev. Rogers was selected as the rural pastor of the year by *The Progressive Farmer* magazine.

The church also had five different bus routes bringing members to the services. During the summer months of World War II the church entertained large groups of soldiers from Mississippi training camps at all day services with dinner on the ground.

Another vital force in the church through the years has been the Women's Missionary Union, begun in 1918. These ladies were, and continue to be, an important part in the mission education and mission support for the church. Mrs. Clifton Keys, a WMU member for 50 years and church WMU director for 18 years, remembers when the ladies would sell eggs, quilt quilts and sell other farm products to get money for the mission offerings.

In 1952 the church built a pastorium (presently used for the minister of music). A second pastorium was built in 1973 at a cost of \$40,000.

The present church building was erected in 1956 on the site of the earlier building. During the construction time, the church met in the Salem School Building. After the school burned in 1957, graduation exercises



This two-story frame building was the Salem School about 1925. This building was located at approximately the site of the present Salem Opry House. The Opry House was the school auditorium from 1949 until the school was consolidated in 1958.

(Photo courtesy of Gladys McCraw Kelly)



This is the Salem Baptist Church in 1955. This building was begun in 1895 with additions through the 1940s until the auditorium could seat 500 with seven large assembly rooms and seventeen classrooms. This building was removed in 1956 to make room for the present building. (Photo courtesy of Roanoke Rogers Keys)

for the last class at Salem School (eighth grade) were held in the church.

The church continues today to emphasize the education of its young and the support of mission work through giving and mission trips. Another valued program of the church is the music ministry. The first music leader was elected in 1916 and the first piano purchased in 1927. Through the years, music has continued to be emphasized in both training and worship.

SALEM TODAY

Salem Community today continues to live up to its name. Salem means peace. Citizens of the community have long stated that there has never been a major crime in Salem. The area today remains rural in nature, but unlike the earlier settlers most residents work outside the farm.

The only industry in the community is farm related. The Collins Greenhouses, owned and operated by twin brothers, Harlan and Hascal Collins, cover two acres. The business, begun in 1967, currently grows bedding plants, pot plants and holiday ornaments such as Easter lilies and poinsettias. The approximately 20 employees produce plants for distribution in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Rogers Creek continues to run through the land and still offers cool water for cattle, fishing and swimming. The late Billy Paul Rogers began in the 1970s to clear part of the creek where the old Ben Rogers gin and grist mill had once been in operation. He even built a replica of the water wheel. Mr. Rogers also cleared some of the debris from the creek and added flowering shrubs and trees to make a park-like area. After his death the project has been continued by his family.

A baptism in the creek was recently held on Mr. Rogers' property much as they had been from the beginning of Salem Church. The earlier baptisms were usually at the end of the protracted meetings (revivals).

FIRST SITE OF THE ORA POST OFFICE REMAINS

Probably the oldest house in the community that is still being lived in was built by George Washington Rogers and his wife, Mattie Washington Carter Rogers, about 100 years ago. The white frame farmhouse is located just north of Salem Church and was the location of the first Ora post office. Mrs. Rogers was postmaster from 1890-1899. The post office served 300 people with mail delivered twice a week. The house today is owned by George and Mattie's granddaughter, Roanoke Rogers Keys, and her husband, Clifton Keys, Sr. Their son, Clifton Keys, Jr., lives in the house.

Descendants of the early settlers continue to call Salem home, daffodils planted by long ago mothers and grandmothers continue to bloom each spring, and occasionally someone will find an arrowhead and remember that the land they love today has been home to many families for many years.

RESOURCES

The Salem Baptist Church History, written in 1974 by Mrs. Mart Rogers, Mrs. Archie Pickering, and Mrs. Judy Huff Collins; History of Salem Baptist Church WMU, compiled by Mrs. Clifton Keys; articles in the *Baptist Record*, June 1943 and December 14, 1946; articles in *The News—Commercial*, June 7, 1974 and August 9, 1963; the history of the Ora Post Office, compiled by Mrs. Clifton Keys; the WPA writings of Mrs. Nathan Rogers, Mrs. Jewel Boyd, and Mrs. Maggie Pittman; conversations with Mrs. Olin Spell, Mrs. Clifton Keys, and Tommy Bott Rogers; *Cemetery Census*, compiled by Mrs. Archie Pickering and Mrs. Mart Rogers (Lucille Skehan); and Mrs. George Rogers.

SANFORD

Sanford was settled in 1852, soon after John Nichols purchased a sixteenth section of land four miles north of Lux, for \$2.50 an acre.

Because of its location on the banks of the Okatoma, John Sanford in 1876 established a water mill there and gave his name to the area. The water mill was used for a sawmill, gin, and grist mill. The mill continued in operation until 1916.

Like many Covington County villages and towns, a growth spurt came to the area when the railroad came through about 1900. Several lumber companies followed.

The first lumber company in Sanford is said to have been the Ericker Lumber Company; they built a sawmill in 1909. Two

years later, a turpentine still was added. While the lumber companies brought almost instant prosperity to an area, the companies also left the land completely denuded of trees and vegetation.

One of the efforts to use the cut-over land resulted in the beginning of the strawberry industry in the area. For approximately 20 years (1910-1930) the strawberry industry was very successful at Sanford. Immigrant workers were brought in to cultivate and harvest the crops. These newcomers were primarily of Hungarian and Italian descent. Some of these families have remained in the area. Several local folk recall the delicious smell of bread baking at the homes of some of the Italian families. A clay oven was built on a small platform outside to cook the bread.

The heyday of the sawmill (believed to be the Eastabuchie Lumber Company) and the strawberry business began to decline about 1930. The sawmill closed in 1930 leaving as its only remnant the large commissary and the "bachelor's hall."

The Sanford Missionary Baptist Church bought the commissary and converted it into their church sanctuary. They have retained the interior as intact as possible, even to the balcony of the store.

The "bachelor's hall," so called because the unmarried mill workers lived there, is now the private residence of Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Shows.

The lumber yard kept the trains coming through the little town of Sanford, and the train kept news from the rest of the country coming. The following was written by Charles R. Shows about his memories of the trains and Sanford.

"Trains were once very important in Sanford. Their arrivals were greeted like a social occasion as the farmers and loggers caught a glimpse of people and cars from Jackson or even Chicago. The trains also brought mail and papers to this news starved town; and they afforded a means for carless people to go to the big "Burg" with its promise of food and finery and a thousand other things desired by a village town. For clockless workers in the fields and woods, the sound of the passenger trains would tell the time of day."

Sanford today is a lovely village that seems to have somehow stepped out of the past, with several old homes beautifully restored. There are two stores, Bryant Grocery and Wallace Grocery and Hardware.

Sanford is a very popular destination today for canoeists. The Okatoma Creek is one of the most desirable waterways for canoeing in the state because of its beautiful scenery and white water. As many as 500 people a week float the creek, according to Lisa Robinson of the Okatoma Outdoor Post. Lisa and her husband, Ronnie, opened the post at Sanford in 1981 and rent canoes between March and October. While some Covington Countians take advantage of this recreational trip, Lisa says that most of their floaters come from Louisiana and Alabama.

SANFORD SCHOOL

The first Sanford School was a small building at the site of the now vacant Sanford School. It is believed that the school opened in 1887. In 1928 new buildings were erected for the school and several smaller schools consolidated at that location.

The main buildings were the high school building, the elementary building, the gymnasium and the cafeteria. Some of the principals of this school from 1928 until its closing in 1958 were Nathan Watts, O. B. Brewer, Frank Lott, and Emmett Harvey.

The buildings remained vacant until 1970 when a private school, Sanford Academy, was housed there for eight years. The Sanford Civic League owns the property today and the cafeteria is used for community meetings and family reunions.

Adjacent to the school building is the Sanford Masonic Lodge #443. The first building of the lodge was near the present Sanford Missionary Baptist Church.

SANFORD POST OFFICE

The first Sanford Post Office was established on March 7, 1894, with John W. Gandy as postmaster. The post office was in various locations through the years, occasionally in one of the local stores.

The postmasters from 1894 to its closing in 1959 were as follows: John W. Gandy, Mar. 7, 1894 to Nov. 3, 1896; John L. Sanford, Nov. 3, 1896 to Sept. 30, 1897; John M. Moore, Sept. 30, 1897 to Oct. 20, 1897; Wm. R. McGowan, Oct. 20, 1897 to June 26, 1900; Thomas L. O'Donnell, June 26, 1900 to May 7, 1907; J. Wallace Gandy, May 7, 1907 to Aug. 20, 1907; Myrta L. Edmondson, Aug. 20, 1907 to Mar. 7, 1908; John T. Lee, Mar. 7, 1908 to Dec. 17, 1914; Clara E. Lee, Dec. 17, 1914 to Dec. 12, 1916; Maggie R. Bostwick, Dec. 12, 1916 to June 8, 1918; Pearl Sanford, June 8, 1918 to (?); (There was a postmaster listed, Willis O. Blackledge, with unreadable dates and other unreadable names and dates until the May 1928 entry.) Mrs. Vergie E. Foxworth, May 23, 1928 to Sept. 4, 1944; Mrs. Sarah E. Lee, Sept. 4, 1944 to June 30, 1959; Mrs. Lessie M. Bowman, June 30, 1959 to Oct. 31, 1959.

CHURCHES

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SANFORD

The First Baptist Church of Sanford was organized in 1896 under the leadership of Rev. J. L. Finley. The earliest records of the church start from September 1927; at that time, J. C. Watts was pastor and Mack Lowery was church clerk.

The following are the names of some of the early members as listed in the church records of 1927: Ella Sumrall, J. A. Shutley, Robert Sumrall, John Sumrall, Candis Reynolds, Lela Oliver, Arthur Oliver, Charlie Morris, W. J. Morris, Minnie Bell Morris, Trudy Myers, Minnie Lowery, John Lee, Mrs. John Lee, D. R. Lowery, Rena Lowery, John Lowery, Henry Lee, Lela Lowery, Sallie Kelly, Burrell Kelly, Tamer Kelly, Luther Hemeter, Mary Hardin, Eliza Hatten, J. C. Dossett, Mrs. S. L. Dossett, B. Coleman, Sallie Carter, Jesse Bryant, Charlie Bryant, John Bryant, P. N. Bryant, Lizzie Beck, and Lenthia Ablar.



The First Baptist Church of Sanford is in the process of enlarging and remodeling its church plant. The church was organized in 1896 under the leadership of Rev. J. L. Finley. (Photo courtesy of Rose Ingram)

The original church building was located between and to the back of the existing church and school. This building served the church until 1931 when a new structure was erected; this time the building was aligned with the newly-constructed Sanford High School. The building committee for this second church was A. R. Hatten, Robert Lowery, R. L. Garrick, Mack Lowery and Walter Lott. Vern Kelly removed the first building.

The church voted to build the present structure in December 1971. Rev. A. E. Allmon was pastor at that time. Services were held in the new church in June of 1972. A fellowship hall was added in 1981, and the church is now in the process of enlarging the present sanctuary and adding more Sunday School rooms.

SANFORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Sanford United Methodist Church began in 1906 and has experienced growth and decline along with the growth and decline of the little town. It is reported that the sister-in-law of Tom O'Donnell (the sawmill owner and developer of the largest lumber business in Sanford), Mrs. Will O'Donnell, said that she would not move to Sanford until there was a Methodist Church.

The family names of some of the early members of the church are O'Donnell, Kemp, Gandy, Reynolds, Morris, Wallace, Pickering, Rawls, Ingram, Manasco, and Gieger.

The church building is a small frame structure with a tall steeple. Housed in the steeple is a bell that continues to toll today, with the use of the same rope.

The furniture and altar rail of the church were handmade by a local artisan, William Henry Harrison Pridgen. Mr. Pridgen's home was located just across from the Sanford School and he did all his carpentry and furniture making from that location.

In addition to the altar rail he made twenty pews, a small cabinet, and a vestibule table for the church.

This same 1906 building is in use today and while the structure has recently been restored, none of the original materials or furniture were replaced.

The pastors of the church since 1906 are as follows: Rev. Ward, 1906; Rev. C. G. Stamps, 1907; Rev. P. H. House, 1908-1909; Rev. B. H. Rawls, 1910; Rev. P. H. House, 1911; Rev. B. H. Rawls, 1912; Rev. P. H. House, 1913; Rev. J. H. Parker, 1914; Rev. W. E. Harrison, 1915; Rev. J. H. Jolly, 1916; Rev. S. E. Moody, 1918; Rev. C. E. Downer, 1919; Rev. H. S. Westbrook, 1920-1922; Rev. J. H. Madox, 1923; Rev. J. H. Foreman, 1924; Rev. J. L. Carter, 1925; Rev. Ladner, 1927-1928; Rev. W. J. Stokes, 1929; Rev. Cooper, 1930's; Rev. McRaney, 1936; Rev. S. Coleman, 1937-1938; Rev. King, 1939; Rev. Herrington, 1940-1941; Rev. Ferguson, 1942-1944; Rev. Paul Davis, 1945; Rev. Hollis Landrum, 1946-1947; Rev. R. B. Walton, 1948-1952; Rev. E. Plumer, 1953; Rev. E. Schwartz, 1954; Rev. Moody, 1955; Rev. Aston, 1956-1957; Rev. Earl Hartfield, 1957-1958; Rev. Yeager, 1958-1959; Rev. Pugh, 1959-1961; Rev. Ellis, 1961-1962; Rev. Youngblood, 1962-1966; Rev. Doyle Moore, 1966-1968; Rev. Larry Speed, 1968-1973; Rev. Hollis Howell, 1973-1975; Rev. Walter Lefler, 1975-1978; Rev. Charles Ashmore, 1978-1979; Rev. Frank Fall, 1979-1981; Rev. Harrell J. Moore, 1981-1985; Rev. Bill Grantham, 1985-

During the 1920s when Sanford was one of the most productive areas for strawberries in the United States, the membership of the church increased as immigrants moved into the area. Some of these families were Pipsk, Critozas, Monar, Tomak, Kovac, Agadac, and Gressler.



The Sanford United Methodist Church worships today in the same white frame building that was built by the founding members in 1906. Much of the sanctuary furniture and the altar rail were made by a local craftsman, William Henry Harrison Pridgen. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Robert Herring)

The membership continued to ebb and flow according to the jobs available locally until, in 1980, there were only nine members left in the church. On a "leap of faith" these members voted to go "full-time" for the first time in the history of the congregation.

This was done and the first full-time pastor was Rev. Frank Fall. The church made such strides in 1980 that it was selected as the "Church of the Year" by the Mississippi Methodist Conference.

SANFORD MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

The Sanford Missionary Baptist Church moved into its present location in early 1934. The church had previously met for a short time in the Sanford School.

The building of the church is the commissary from the Eastabutchie Lumber Co. that had moved from the town in 1930. The exterior of the building has been bricked and gives a very modern appearance, but the interior has been kept, as much as is possible, to the interior of the commissary. The balcony and the supporting posts are the original heart pine lumber.

Pastors of the church have been J. M. Stuart, Carl Sullivan (30 years), Curtis Shows, C. P. Toney, and Billy Mack Lowery (the present pastor). The current membership is approximately 260.

RESOURCES

Mrs. Robert Herring; "A History of Sanford United Methodist Church" by Dr. John E. Wallace, an article in *The News Commercial*, by Charles Shows October 5, 1983; Jean Jordan; the WPA writings of Mrs. D. W. Giles; Rachel Perry; Coot Moore; Ella Spell; Curtis Shows; Lisa Robinson; and *A History of Seminary, Mississippi* by Jerry Windsor.

SANTEE

The Santee Post Office was the eighth to be established in Covington County. Santee is located due west of Seminary about half way between Seminary and Bowie Creek. The post office was begun on May 22, 1843 with Elias Redman as the postmaster. He served until January 30, 1867, when the office was closed.

It reopened on March 5, 1873 with Thomas L. H. Caraway as the postmaster. Others to serve after him were Michael O. Rorke, April 21, 1881 to May 19, 1885; Jeanie E. O. Rorke, May 19, 1885 to February 15, 1890; Hugh A. McLeod, February 15, 1890 to June 23, 1893; and Janie C. Powers, June 23, 1893 to July 2, 1906.

RESOURCES

A map dated 1900, courtesy of Mrs. Orland Lott, and "The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

SHILOH

The Shiloh Community surrounds the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in the northwestern part of the county on Highway 532, between Mount Olive and the intersection of Salem Church Road and Highway 532.

The church was organized on October 3, 1860, with Rev. Steve Mayfield as the first pastor. The following were the charter members: Mr. and Mrs. Billy Rutland; Mr. and Mrs. Alex Chain; Mr. and Mrs. Alex Hall; Mr. and Mrs. John R. Chain; and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gibbons, Sr.

The first building was a log house and it was nearer to Blakley Creek than is the present church building. The church was moved to Mish (between Collins and Mount Olive near the Okatoma Creek) about 1863, but it returned to the present location in 1866. Another building was erected in 1901 and the present building was built in 1951-52.

According to Elton Flynt, "church was held once a month back in those early days and **everybody** went. Some rode in buggies or wagons, but alot walked to the services."

Mr. Flynt also recalls that probably the most exciting Sunday in the church's history was the "battle at the creek." Because Shiloh is in the edge of Sullivan's Hollow, many of the Sullivan clan were present for the fight. The following is how Chester Sullivan describes the battle in his book, *Sullivan's Hollow*.

"In the summer of 1878 a big revival was held at Shiloh Baptist Church, five miles west of Gilmer, which was attended by almost everyone in the Hollow. The fight that occurred here was of more local importance than anything that had ever happened, and it came to be called the Battle of Shiloh. (Not to be confused with the Civil War Battle of Shiloh in April 1862, near Corinth.) Here Bill and Nease (Sullivan) earned the reputation of having plenty of nerve. Because of that reputation, most people later left them alone, especially when they were on one of their sprees."

Stories differ as to who exactly was involved, but it is generally agreed that Wild Bill and Nease Sullivan, and some of the Dikes (sometimes spelled Dykes) and Chains got into an argument over something someone said about one of the Sullivan wives. A free-for-all followed and when the air cleared, Frank Gibbons had killed Gabe Chain and Jim Dikes, and had stabbed Nease Sullivan.

The story goes that Nease was cut in his stomach area and that his intestines were coming out. He is said to have picked them up (his intestines), washed them in a nearby spring and rode to a house, where he was sewn up. It is also reported that after the battle, the preacher would bring his rifle to church for protection.

SHILOH SCHOOL

The Shiloh School began about 1901, and met in the Shiloh Church. At one time T. J. Mayfield was the principal and Bessie Flynt was the assistant principal. The school closed in 1912 and joined with Blakley, and Midway schools in the consolidation of Smith School.

FLYNT POST OFFICE

The first Flynt Post Office opened on December 31, 1885, with John C. Flynt as the postmaster. The office was closed on February 10, 1887, with the mail going to Mount Olive.

The office reopened on July 19, 1900, with William F. Flynt as the postmaster. Other postmasters to follow were John H. Worthy, October 4, 1900 to December 26, 1902; John C. Flynt, December 26, 1902 to January 28, 1904; Anna J. Flynt, January 28, 1904 to August 15, 1904; and Stella Worthy, August 15, 1904 to December 30, 1905.

The office closed for the last time on December 30, 1905 with the mail again going to Mount Olive.

RESOURCES

Elton Flynt, *Sullivan's Hollow* by Chester Sullivan, "The Post Office History of Covington County" by Broox Sledge, and Mrs. Morris Lee.

SITKA

Sitka was the site of a post office from 1903 to 1907. It was located in the home of Dr. George Cranford on Highway 588 about one-half mile west of the Jones County line. Dr. Cranford was appointed postmaster on April 22, 1903. The mail service was discontinued on February 26, 1907, and the mail was sent to Seminary.

RESOURCES

John Redmon and Broox Sledge.

SMITH

The Smith Community is located nine miles northeast of Collins, basically where the Salem Church Road junctions with Highway 532. The area is called by various names since several small communities appear to overlap. It was first called Shiloh since the Shiloh Baptist Church is located nearby. After the Gordon Yawn family settled there in 1875, it was called Yawn. The Yawn voting precinct was established by the Constitution of 1892 and it is still known as the Yawn Box.

In 1910, the Yawn School was consolidated with several others to become a Smith-Hughes School. After that time, the area was called Smith.

S. S. Knight opened a store in 1917 in sight of the school. In 1938-39 he built another store just up the road on what is now Highway 532. This store was operated by Mr. Knight's son, Lynn, until the late 1970s.

RESOURCES

The WPA writings of Mrs. D. W. Giles, 1938; Evelyn Knight McLaurin; and Louise Mayfield.

SPEEDTOWN

Speedtown was the first county seat of government in Covington County. It was so-named in the Legislative Act of January 5, 1819, that established the county. The act provided for court to be held twice a year at the "house of Doctor Shelton, or as near the same, as may be."

It is generally agreed that the court was held under a magnolia tree on the farm of William Speed. The tree was located in the middle of a mayhaw pond. (mayhaws are a small, orange fruit, similar to the crab-apple, and the rather large trees grow in a moist, boggy "pond.") It is believed that a brush arbor was built for shade and that later a crude log house was built. The first court held in this courthouse was presided over by Judge McDuff. The log house stood for many years after the county seat was moved and continued to be used for justice court.

An Act of the Legislature on January 23, 1824, provided that a more central location be found for a county seat. The following were appointed as commissioners to locate a county seat and secure "not less than twenty acres, nor more than eighty, by donation or purchase, on which to erect a courthouse and jail." This was done and in 1829 land was secured to build a courthouse in Williamsburg.

Speedtown is located in what is now known as the Willow Grove Community. The magnolia tree was located on what is now the land of Lloyd Speed. The tree survived until the recent past, possibly 10-15 years ago, when it succumbed to numerous bolts of lightning and died.

According to Charlie Sanford, who lives across the road from the tree site, "it was enormous." Mr. Sanford also says that there has been talk off and on to put a marker at the site of the old tree, but that this has never been done.

Charlie Sanford and his wife Blanche live at the site of the Speedtown Post Office, and when they moved there after World War II the little post office building was still there.

The one-room building was in disrepair and was torn down, although in hindsight, Mr. Sanford regrets not trying to restore it.

It was about 12x16 ft. and had a small porch with the name above the porch. The mail boxes inside were still intact. The first (and only) postmaster was James L. (Jim) Speed. The office was open from May 18, 1900 to June 30, 1915, when the mail was moved to Seminary.

Down the road, a short distance from the post office site, is the Speed Cemetery, where many of the early settlers are buried. The cemetery continues to be kept by members of the Speed family.

RESOURCES

The Mississippi Legislative Act that provides for the organization of Covington County; the WPA writings of an unknown writer; Blanche and Charlie Sanford; "The Post Office History of Covington County" by Broox Sledge; and Lucille Rogers Skehan.

STATION CREEK

The community of Station Creek in the eastern part of Covington County has served on at least two occasions as a "home away from home" for young men who found themselves away from their families. Tradition tells us that General Andrew Jackson stationed his troops on a creek there in 1815 on his return trip from the Battle of New Orleans. Over 120 years later, the area was home for hundreds of young men who worked at the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp there.

After General Jackson's encampment, the creek would forever after be called Station Creek. Jackson returned again to the area sometime between 1816 and 1820 when he was given the job of building a much-needed road through the Mississippi territory. The road began at Columbia, Tennessee, came into Mississippi at Columbus and crossed Mississippi northeast to southwest through the Piney Woods, ending at Madisonville, Louisiana. The road crossed Covington County northeast to southwest.

The building of the Jackson Military Road seems to have been an encouragement for settlers. According to a WPA interview with Mrs. Kid Young in 1937, B. F. Speed came to the area in 1834. Mrs. Young said that Mr. Speed had over 1000 head of sheep and cattle and was known as an excellent farmer.

Rev. Norvell Robertson (a founder of the neighboring Leaf River Church) was another early settler. He also owned large herds and operated the first cotton gin in the area.

SHOPPING TRIPS WERE INFREQUENT

Life was not easy for those early pioneers. Even with the Military Road, the process of getting goods in and out was a laborious one. Getting supplies meant a three to four day trip to Ellisville or an even longer trip to Mobile. Transportation would be an oxen wagon loaded with wool, cotton, and other farm products. Occasionally turkeys would be herded along to market.

These trips were very infrequent, perhaps once or twice a year and the return trip would bring barrels of flour and sugar as well as other necessities. These trips were needed even until the turn of the century when the railroad came through and Collins became a trade center.

Mrs. Ray Aultman has what appears to have been a "grocery list" from one such shopping trip. The list is entered in a "Land Book" which belonged to her grandfather, Ben Wade, and is dated March 14, 1893. The list:

8 yd homspun	48¢
1 yd calico	60¢
1# tobacco	45¢
1 peck potatoe	55¢
coffee	25¢
Snuff	10¢
1 peck of meal	25¢
½ gal molasses	25¢
lard	66¢

This Land Book was compliments of Hough and Ellis Druggist, Ellisville, Mississippi. It contained advertising for the Paines Celery Compound which claimed "to cure nervous debility and exhaustion, neuralgia, sleeplessness, melancholia, hysteria, headache, dyspepia, rheumatism, kidney trouble, constipation, salt rheum, eczema, disordered liver and all blood diseases." It further stated that the compound was known the "world over as the medicine that makes people well."

STATION CREEK SCHOOL

It is believed a school was started at Station Creek in the late 1800s. The first building was just north of the present Station Creek Church. The one-room building was made of split logs with a fireplace in one end. The chimney was made of large sticks and mud.

The students sat on benches made of hewn logs with pegs stuck in the logs for legs. One hewn log remained at the back of the school room and was used for a writing desk.

The students came to school two to three months in the winter and one month in the summer. The school was financed by "subscription." The parents paid tuition for each child. Lessons were in the subjects of reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and the "blue back speller." Miss Ruthey Wade was one of the first teachers.

About 1905 a new larger school building was built just west of the present church location. This was a wooden frame building with three rooms. Some of the teachers in that building were Bob Craft, Leah Craft, Jeff Mayfield, Oscar Cole and a Mr. Golden.

R. T. Wade recalls that the school playground had a "border-line" that was used to divide the girls' side of the playground from the boys side.

Station Creek School was consolidated with Salem School in 1928 and the building was sold and dismantled.

SITE OF U. S. POST OFFICE

Postal records show that a Station Creek post office was established on September 20, 1869, with Irving Clark as postmaster. He served until April 25, 1880. Other postmasters to follow were Charles L. Mitchell, April 25, 1880-September 14, 1882; J. W. Robertson, September 14, 1882-October 31, 1882; George Pond, October 31, 1882-June 17, 1886; and Tandy W. Crawford, June 17, 1886-November 3, 1886. The office was closed on November 3, 1886 with the mail going to Williamsburg. The locations of these post offices are unknown, but it was the general custom to operate out of one's home.

STATION CREEK CHURCH

On or about April 15, 1899, the Station Creek Missionary Baptist Church was organized in the first school building. Charter members were Rev. Wig Walters, Rev. Steve Mayfield, Wiley and Josephine Knight, Bill and Lecither Bounds, Davis and Nora Wade, Ben and Margaret Wade, Cater and Florence Robertson and John and Mary Wood. Soon afterwards, Tom Wade and Nealy Wade joined the church. Tom Wade and Cater Robertson were the first deacons. Wiley Knight was the first church clerk.

Other early family names of those who aided in the establishment of the school and church were Knight, Jones, Mauldin, Wood, Flynt, Dickens, Bounds, Quick, Speed, Keys, Rogers and King.

The church met in the school building with services which met at first once a month and, later, twice a month. In 1908 the name was changed to Station Creek Landmark Missionary Baptist Church.

The present building was built in the early 1920s with Rev. Jeff Lott as pastor. The building has been renovated several times since then, but it still stands on the original foundation.

Rev. Stanley Rainey served the church as pastor for the longest period of time, 20 years. Rev. Reece Douglas, Jr. is the current pastor.

MAULDIN WATER MILL

The school and church got water from a nearby spring, which also provided power for Ed Mauldin's water mill. Beginning in the early 1900s the mill ground corn meal for the surrounding communities. Mauldin later installed a threshing machine which threshed peas, rice, oats, velvet beans (a type of cattle food that had a fuzzy shell), and other grains. The machines operated on water power from a pond. It was soon named the Old Mill Pond and became a popular swimming-hole for the community.

WADE TOWN

In the late 1920s Thomas Warren (Tom) Wade opened a small country store on what is now Highway 84 in the general location of the home of Mrs. Troy (Clara) Wade. This little store had a hand-operated gas pump and was a real convenience to the families who needed small items between trips to Collins.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Wade moved to the area around 1900. They had thirteen children, many of whom settled in the community. In the early 30s a son, Troy, and his wife bought the store and gas station. With the coming of the new Highway 84 in the late 30s they built a larger store and added a grist mill.

In the 30s Hayes Castle opened a sawmill on Oakey (Okey) Woods Creek which flows into the Station Creek. Troy Wade purchased this mill after a short time and moved it to the site of his store, grist mill, and service station. With the addition of several "box car" type buildings that were purchased as homes for the sawmill and

farm workers, the area became known as Wade Town. For a period of time Wade Town was literally "on the map."

Another reason for Wade Town being "on the map" was that it was a stopping point for the Blue Bus that made a daily trip from Prentiss along Highway 84 to Waynesboro. This made for much easier trips to nearby Laurel.

The decline of Wade Town seems to have begun when the price of labor and timber increased. The family continued to operate the store until the early 60s.

CCC CAMP

During President Franklin Roosevelt's administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps was organized to train and give jobs to young men between the ages of 18-21. A camp was established just south of the present location of the Station Creek Church in 1933 and was known as Camp SCS-10.

The approximately 200 young men there were assigned from all over the South. They were trained in soil conservation techniques such as terracing, tree planting, building fences, and clearing wooded areas. It was at this time that kudzu was introduced to the area in an effort to curb erosion. Also planted were numerous locust and pine trees.

Buster Mullins had come to the camp from his home in Alabama. He married a local girl and has stayed in the community. He recalls that CCC workers lived in barracks and ate in a large mess hall. (The slab of the mess hall remains today.) There was also a recreation center that included pool tables, a boxing ring, and a baseball field.



This three-room frame building was built about 1905 and was used as both church and school. This particular group is the church congregation in the early 1900s. This building was sold and dismantled when the school consolidated with Salem in 1928. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Ray Aultman)

The young men were paid \$30 a month plus food, medical expenses, and clothes. They were given \$8 and the remainder was sent home to their families.

The camp closed shortly after Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, but some of the workers chose to stay in the area. These include Virgil Logan, Clyde Minter and John Lewis.

STATION CREEK TODAY

The rich soil that first attracted the early farmers still entices today's farmers. Primary products now are soybeans, cattle, wheat and poultry.

The Old Mill Pond is still a popular spot for relaxing, but the Blue Bus comes through no more. The enlarged four-lane highway now allows its traffic to speed quickly through land that has known General Andrew Jackson, countless herds of sheep and cattle, the once bustling Wade Town, and the hundreds of young men who lived and learned on its soil.

RESOURCES

Information for this chapter was provided by Mrs. Ray Aultman, Steve Ellis, Mrs. Troy Wade, R. T. Wade, Mrs. Velna Cranford, Station Creek Church records, Melva Jean Rogers, Jake Winfield, Sylvester Knight, Buster Mullins, Mrs. Louie Upton, and WPA files written in 1937-38.



These are students at the first Station Creek School. This one-room log building served as both school and church after 1899. This photo was taken in 1903; the teacher is Miss Ruthy Wade. Those identified in the group are Lezy Wade Dickens (first on the first row) and Frank Wade (second on the first row). Bronson Rogers is first on the third row. Note the matching dresses of the three girls on the left side and the three girls on the right side. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Ray Aultman)



Station Creek School 1914.

First row: (left to right) Beulah Mauldin Upton, John William Jordan, Velma King Cranford, J. C. Pickering, Hollis Thaxton, unidentified, R. T. Wade, unidentified and Nonnie Wade.

Second row: (left to right) Lizzie King, Mae Eubanks, Agnes Moffett, Gertrude Jordan, Lawrence Speed, Leona Spiegth. The teachers on this row are Jeff Mayfield and Leah Craft and from end Edna Mauldin.

Third row: (left to right) Velma, M. L. Shoemake, Eubanks, Ben Speed, William King, Willie Wade, Harry Mauldin, unidentified, Troy Wade, Dewey Mauldin, Eula Eubanks, Erma Speed, Hester Speed, Alberta King and unidentified.

Fourth row: (left to right) Ruthie Mauldin, Redie Dickens, Kate Speed Broom, Ada Yates, Velma Collins, Francis Quick Dickens, Annie Mauldin Daughtry, Florence Wade Hudson, Pearlma Mauldin Craft, Lillie McGee, Ethel Mauldin Ford, Mable McGee, Thelma Keys.

Fifth row: (left to right) Floyd McGee, Leland Speed, Oscar Eubanks, Melvin Mauldin, Liston Speed, John Speed, Charlie Quick, Mark Collins, Rich Dickens, Dewey King, Walter Keys, last two unidentified.

(Photo courtesy of Mrs. Ray Aultman)

THAMES

The extinct post office of Thames is located on one map as being northwest of Seminary. The one postmaster there was Thomas M. Thames and he served from September 6, 1893, to June 15, 1906. The mail was sent to Collins when the office closed on June 15, 1906.

RESOURCE

"The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

UNION (NORTH)

The Union Community in the northern part of the county basically surrounds the Union Baptist Church, located on Highway 532 between the Mississippi Forestry Commission Mount Olive Nursery and Hot Coffee.

Union Baptist Church was organized on August 31, 1888, by the following charter members: R. C. Hathorn, W. C. Mayfield, John Mayfield, Willie Mayfield, G. L. Mayfield, L. L. Mayfield, Stephen Mayfield, John Mayfield, Jeffie Gaddis, Stephen Howell, S. M. Sullivan, Thomas Jordan, Marion Copeland, Levi Davis, G. M. Hathorn, Loden Sullivan, Thomas

Johnson, J. W. Keys, T. W. Sullivan, W. F. Spell, J. B. Cole, Keziah Hathorn, Adline Mayfield, Julia Mayfield, Laura Mayfield, Mollie Mayfield, Susan Rhodes, Bettie Rhodes, Jane Sullivan, Mollie L. Sullivan, Mary Howell, Mary Jordan, E. L. Sullivan, Keziah Keys, Cora Carter, Colon Howell, Elizabeth Mayfield, Mollie Mayfield, Susan Jordan, L. C. Owens, Keziah C. Spell, Joan L. Spell, M. R. Spell, Rhoda Cole, and L. E. Cole.

L. J. Caughman became the church's first pastor in September, 1888. Other pastors who have served the church since that time include: G. W. Boyd, L. D. Bassett, D. W. McLeod, W. P. Chaptman, J. L. Wilson, J. A. Johnson, J. W. Franklin, H. F. Husbands, Will Craft, F. S. Gibson, H. J. Lenton, A. J. Hughes, Carl Sullivan, R. C. Bounds, Mack Jones, A. N. Abercrombie, J. C. McDavid, S. R. Pridgen, Athens McNeil, Joe Boutwell, and Willis Bryant. Rev. B. E. Sellers became the church's present pastor in October, 1953.

The original structure was torn down and the present building constructed in the early 1930's. Since that time it has undergone several renovations. The church was bricked in 1982 through contributions made in memory of Jerry Vaughn, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Vaughn. Jerry was a descendent of charter member W. F. Spell, the church's first clerk.

RESOURCE

Donna McDaniel



The Union Baptist Church (South) was organized on September 21, 1908 and Rev. I. L. Stone was the first pastor (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Lucy Trigg)

UNION (SOUTH)

The community of Union was called Foxtrot during the 1890s because of the abundance of foxes in the area. The location is approximately five miles south of Seminary, just off Highway 49.

Some of the early settlers of the area were the families of Walton, Norris, Bryant, Mooney, Lott, Trigg, Ingram, and Fairchild.

WALTON SCHOOL

It was on the farm of George Walton that the first school at Union was begun. It was about one mile north of the present Union Baptist Church and was called Walton School. It is believed that school was first held in a one room log house about 1850.

In 1900, a larger, three room frame building was erected for the school, about one-half mile west of the Union Baptist Church on the land of Matthew Dearman. The property today belongs to C. C. Norris.

In 1929, the school was consolidated with some of the students going to Seminary and some to Sanford schools.

Some of the early teachers, as recalled by Mrs. Lucy Bullock Trigg, were S. B. Williams, Letha Powell, Lucy Ann Bryant (Quick), Pearl Watts, Vergia Watts, Ora Watkins (Mooney), Bill Lott, and Clara Lott. Bill Lott and his daughter, Clara, were the last teachers at Walton School.

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH (SOUTH)

The Union Baptist Church was organized on September 21, 1908, in the Walton School. (Union Church is sometimes called Union South because there is also a Union

Baptist Church in the northern part of the county.) The first pastor of the church was Rev. I. L. Stone and the charter members were Allen and Mary Ann Bryant, Jonas Bryant, Rheuben Bryant, W. W. and Mahala Lott, T. J. and Elizabeth Norris, John M. and Melvina Mooney.

The church continued to meet in the school building until 1933 when W. J. Ingram donated land at the present location. The church today is built around this original structure, but there have been several additions and renovations.

Music is an important part of the church's worship and the church has produced several excellent musicians. The church's entry in the Mississippi Baptist Convention Quartet Contest on March 23, 1985, won the state contest in their division. The members of the quartet were Mary Anne Lee, accompanist and director, Denise Lee, Timothy Trigg, Terry Trigg and Phillip Butler.

PASTORS OF UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

I. L. Stone, A. J. Creel, A. A. Bryant, R. G. Loper, B. A. Ashworth, Lee McGowan, A. A. Bryant, Vander W. Fairchild, J. E. Pitts, S. E. Nix, G. W. Pitts, Gaston Mooney, J. C. Murphy, Tom Stroud, S. E. Nix, A. V. Floggard, R. R. Darby, H. L. Fewell, Johnny Fox, Leo Mangum, C. J. Hughes, Richard E. Martin, Ted Lott, Wilford Six, Wade Allen, Howard Hamrick, Clarence Thurman, Julian Thompson, William P. Osborn, Michael Racey, and Bill Mitchell.

RESOURCES

Lucy Bullock Trigg and Billy Folkes.



The congregation of Union Baptist Church (South) posed for this photo in 1952. Rev. Johnny Fox was the church's pastor at the time. Since this photo was taken, the church has erected another building. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Lucy Trigg)

VEX (EXTRA)

A post office was established by the name of Extra on September 26, 1904 with Rachael A. Magee as the postmaster. On June 24, 1905, the name was changed to Vex with Rachael A. Magee continuing as postmaster until the office was discontinued on December 15, 1907, with the mail going to Collins. Vex was located just north of Dry Creek (Lone Star) in the west central part of Covington County.

RESOURCE

"The Post Office History of Covington County" by Broox Sledge.

WELCH

According to research done on the post offices in Covington County by Broox Sledge, there was a post office called Welch. The date of organization was April 27, 1886, with James N. Welch as postmaster. Welch was located about one mile north of Highway 588 just at the Jones County line.

Sledge's research states that "Jerry Crawford was listed as postmaster in the record in 1899 with his name noted by an 'appointment rescinded' entry. The same with Jeremiah L. Crawford, March 7, 1900 with the Jeremiah crossed out and Katie written in. There was no other explanation." Katie post office was near Eminence Methodist Church.

RESOURCES

Broox Sledge and John Redmon.

WHEELERVILLE

William J. Hamilton was the only postmaster at this post office and he served from June 29, 1881 to September 9, 1886. The office was closed on September 9, 1886, with the mail going to Richmond. The office name was changed to "Lux" and it was reopened in 1899.

RESOURCE

"The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

WILKESBURG

On a map dated 1900, Wilkesburg is shown to be in the extreme southwestern corner of Covington County, almost in Marion County. This was before Jefferson Davis County was formed and the western boundary of Covington County was a straight line, parallel with Mount Carmel. Wilkesburg was shown to be just west of the Holliday Creek.

The postmasters were Stephen H. Wilks, March 14, 1850 to April 26, 1859; Office closed from April 26, 1859 to March 14, 1860; Marcus E. Carter, March 14, 1860 to April 18, 1871; Office closed from April 18, 1871 to June 26, 1873; Mike O. Rorke, June 26, 1873 to May 1, 1880; H. P. Wilks, May 1, 1880 to September 10, 1883; Office closed from September 10, 1883 to October 23, 1883; Miss Emily O'Rorke, October 23, 1883 to September 26, 1887; (Notice that the record began to show the surname "O'Rorke" spelled differently than in previous entries.) Sarah E. O'Rorke, September 26, 1887 to July 1, 1889; Pauline O'Rorke, July 1, 1889 to September 28, 1893; Office closed from September 28, 1893 to October 28, 1893; Pauline Reddoch, October 28, 1893 to July 27, 1898; Thomas J. Reddoch, July 27, 1898 to January 21, 1903; Mary S. Avery, January 21, 1903 to February 18, 1904. The final entry was dated February 18, 1904 and read, "Now in Marion County."

RESOURCES

A map dated 1900, used courtesy of Mrs. Orland Lott; and "The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.

WILLOW GROVE

WILLOW GRAVE BAPTIST CHURCH

The first seat of government in Covington County in 1819 was located under a Magnolia tree on the William Speed farm in what is now called the Willow Grove Community. The first name for the general area was Speedtown, and it seems to have adopted the name "Willow Grove" when a school was begun and named Willow Grove School. (The community generally surrounds the Willow Grove Church, located just south of Highway 588 in east central Covington County.)

The school had several sites throughout the years and was located in the general vicinity of the present homes of Mrs. Lonnie Chancellor and B. A. McQueen, when it was used for a protracted (revival) meeting in the late summer of 1907.

The meeting, conducted by Bro. J. W. Steen of Star, Mississippi, was very successful and its success encouraged a small band of believers to organize a church in the school.

The first church members came from the neighboring churches of Leaf River Baptist and Lebanon Baptist and the new Christians baptized during the summer revival.

The date of organization was October 13, 1907, with Bro. Steen returning as the first pastor. The first charter members were Lavada Coulter, Ida Carlisle, Sarah Flemings, Edgar Flemings, Mammie Knight, G. E. Knight, Dora Mitchell,

Millon Pickering, R. A. Pickering, J. E. Quick, Jane Rawls, Ada Rawls (Lee), S. A. Rawls, Virgie Rawls, Epsia Rawls (Eppie?), M. Rawls, James Rawls, John Rawls, P. M. Rawls, Emma Sanford, Donna Sanford, Issac Abercrombie, Mrs. W. S. Bowen, W. S. Bowen, Josie Cato, Bamma Cato, Ada Coulter, Estella Cook, James Langston, Annie Mitchell, Lou Mitchell, Ophalia Mitchell, Martin Mitchell, B. H. (Bura) Mitchell, Bay Mitchell, F. W. Mitchell, M. E. Yawn, Malinda Yawn, Pearl Sanford, Amanda Sanford, Myrtis Sanford (Pickering), Eliza (Louisa) Yawn, Pearl Yawn, J. D. Yawn, Minnie Williamson, Ora Williamson, F. L. Williamson, W. W. Williamson, J. A. Williamson, Wiley Williamson, J. L. Welch, Chellie Knight, Ruthie Knight, Lucretia Knight, A. T. Abercrombly [sic], Hester Abercrombly [sic], Susie Abercrombie, Ramsey Abercrombie, Willie Abercrombie, Caroline Quick, Bettie Robertson, Bettie Rowell, Sarah Sellers, Ruben Sellers, Jim Doyle Sanford, Cicero Sanford, Martin Speed, Thomas Thompson, Almedie Williamson, Dovie Williamson, Gordon Yawn, Joe Yawn, Bruce Parker, Azzeleen Yawn, and J. N. Yawn. Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Pickering are still members of the church.

The church continued to meet in the schoolhouse until the summer of 1908, when a church structure was erected on land donated by P. M. (Pad) Rawls. The present church stands on this original site. The committee members for this building project were R. A. Pickering, Everette Knight, W. F. Rawls, P. M. Rawls, and Charlie Sanford. Charlie Sanford donated the hardwood which was used for building the structure. (Later this lumber was used to floor the second church, erected in 1945.)



This photo of the Willow Grove Baptist Church was taken by Rutha Mitchell in 1945 as preparation was being made to take down this building to erect another church building. The truck in front belonged to Allen Pickering and the boy is Dennis Mitchell. (Photo courtesy of Nelda Spell Mitchell)

In 1945, following the harsh Depression Days and the bleak days of World War II, the church undertook a second building project, "the new church." Bura Mitchell, Ike Abercrombie, T. J. Manning, R. A. Pickering, Rozzie McQueen, Will Lee, and Frank Speed provided leadership for the erection of the modest brick church. Bro. Alex Abercrombie was pastor for the beginning of this project and Bro. Howard Fewell was serving as pastor when the church building was successfully completed.

The new building enabled the church to organize Sunday School, and to hold worship services once a month, on the first Saturday and Sunday mornings of the month. (The pastor also served other churches of the area.) Conference was held after the Sunday service. Bad weather during the winter months sometimes prevented church services.

In 1961 an addition to the building for Sunday School rooms and a fellowship hall was begun. Families of the church donated trees for this addition. Bura Mitchell hauled the logs to the mill and returned the finished lumber to the church site where the men of the church built the addition. Ike Abercrombie and Max Mitchell were the first to work at digging the foundation. This project was completed the winter of 1963-1964 after Bro. Alex Abercrombie began his second ministry in the church.

Many have donated labor materials and money for the church's improvement during the years. Pad Rawls donated land for the church and cemetery; others gave trees and labor. Willis Pickering matched all cash gifts to raise money needed for the new (1945) church. Mrs. Bruce (Pearl) Parker of Hot Springs, Ark., left her estate to the church in 1971. These funds were used to redecorate the sanctuary which included installing new carpet, pews, altar furniture, and light fixtures.

Allen Pickering, Reba Rogers, and Mack Allen Pickering donated the steeple. Dennis and Nelda Mitchell donated the four sanctuary doors and six hundred dollars for a new roof. During this time, the classrooms and fellowship hall were improved and Bro. Alex and Mrs. Olivia Abercrombie remodeled the choir loft and podium. They also assumed the expenses of planning and overseeing the purchasing and installing of the furniture and carpet. Olivia Abercrombie and Edna Abercrombie purchased drapes for the baptistry.

Irene Laird established a trust fund for the church and the family of Allie Rawls has given generous cash gifts to the church. Mr. and Mrs. Will Lee donated additional land to the church to construct a new pastorium and to enlarge the cemetery.

During the summer of 1975, the church completed the building of a new pastorium, twenty years after it had built its first one.

The Sunday School women raised money to buy draperies for the pastorium. In a month's time the women raised eight hundred dollars for the project. Ladies serving on this committee were Edith Greiger, Reba Rogers, Louise Speed, Myrtis Pickering, and Margaret Gandy. Serving on the building committee for the construction of the pastorium were Dennis Mitchell, Harmon Bryant, Delmer Rogers, Bob Dean, and Jerry Ford.

Music has always been an important part of the church's worship and the sponsoring of a singing school was for many years an annual affair before each summer revival meeting. Singing teachers through the years have been Marion Blackwell, Polie Fairchild, Jim Keys, and Mrs. Alex Rawls.

The church's first musical worship leaders were Wash Rawls, Martin Mitchell, and Jimmy Rawls. Bura Mitchell was the first organist and others who have served as musicians are Flossie Coulter, Ida Carlisle, Vera Faye Sumrall, Johnnie Pickering Ford, Julia McQueen Graham, Danny Sanford, and Phyllis Pickering Knight. Trey Carter was called to be the church's first minister of music on January 16, 1977.

The church celebrated the 75th anniversary of its founding on October 10, 1982. The present pastor, Rev. Billy Purser preached, as did Rev. H. L. Fewell. The only two living charter members, Myrtis Sanford Pickering and Ada Rawls Lee, were present at the anniversary.



The girls' basketball team of Willow Grove School posed for this photo in 1918, it was later reprinted on a post card. The members of the team were (left to right) back row—Pearl Yawn, Minnie Yawn, Vada Coulter, Ada Coulter, and Pal Mae Graham; second row—Vergie Rawls, Liza Yawn, and Myrtle Yawn; front row—Alice Biglane, Estelle Cook, and Ruthie Mitchell. (Photo courtesy of Sadie Rawls)

The following have served the church as pastors: J. W. Steen, C. H. Andrews, T. C. Bankston, J. T. Dale, W. F. Jeffries, A. A. Bryant, J. A. Johnson, G. W. Boyd, W. J. Lott, J. B. Parker, B. A. Ashworth, J. E. Cranford, Alex Abercrombie, Howard Fewell, Bernard Saucier, Rayford Pridden, Roy Raddin, Ed Sullivan, Bill Wood, Alex Abercrombie, Tom Jackson, Virgil Horsley, George B. King, William T. Evans, Gary Lightfoot, H. L. Fewell, Cliff Padgett, and Billy Purser.

The church clerks have been: G. E. Knight, P. W. Harper, B. H. Mitchell, J. W. Rawls, Allen Pickering, Vardaman Rawls, Rachel Sanford, Maybelle McQueen, Lois Dee Pickering, Rhonda Yawn, Edna Abercrombie, and Catherine Dean.

The deacons of the church have been: R. A. Pickering, J. C. Sanford, Charlie Sanford, Sr., Dan Yawn, Jim Rawls, Ike Abercrombie, Ike Sanford, Charlie Sanford, Rex Mitchell, John Douglas Pickering, James Robbins, Vardaman Rawls, Delmer Rogers, Russell Thaxton, Max Mitchell, Jerry Ford, Harmon Bryant, Bob Dean, A. B. Graham, Herman Lee, Roger Sanford, Lonnie Chancellor, Dan Pickering, Hershel Gandy, Bob E. Yawn, Danny Wade, and Ralph Sims.

A church history of Willow Grove states, "The people of Willow Grove Church are not perfect. As all of God's children, they too are subject to pride, harsh words, and pettiness, but the church is greater than these human faults. In spite of human failing, the churches of God stand and endure, giving comfort and aid to the needy, inspiration and hope to the seeking, and opportunity to serve God to all who will take advantage. Willow Grove is no exception. It is a reminder of God's providential care and love and offers to any the privilege to worship and serve God."

The members of the church pride themselves on their ability to worship together and to work together for the common good. This spirit of cooperation is exemplified by the following story, also in the church's history.

"When Rachel Cranford and Herman Milner announced their plans for a church wedding, the first in the old church, Elbert Yawn rode his mule and visited every family in the community. Each family donated twenty-five cents to buy paint and to paint the church."

SCHOOL

The first Willow Grove School was located at a willow head near a small creek. The date of its establishment is unknown, since all school records burned in the Williamsburg courthouse fire in 1904. Its beginning date was, more than likely, in the 1890s, since the Willow Grove Baptist Church was organized in the second school building in 1907.

The first building was a log structure and was located just below the present Willow Grove Cemetery. It is believed that Jack Cranford was the first teacher. Bro. Cranford was also a minister and preached at one time or the other in many Covington County churches.

The second building, was built with lumber from Kola Mill, a three-room frame structure, and was located near the present homes of Mrs. Lonnie Chancellor and B. A. McQueen. This three-teacher school served grades 1-9. Two who taught there were Mrs. D. L. O. Manning and Pat Harper. The date of its closing was in the late 1920s. Many schools in Covington County consolidated in 1928, but it is thought that the Willow Grove School stayed open one or two years after that.

RESOURCES

"A History of Willow Grove Church" by Janice Kervin Connerly with Myrtis Pickering, Allen Pickering, Edith Geiger, and Nelda Spell Mitchell; Rev. and Mrs. Billy Purser, Rachel Sanford, Myrtis Pickering, Mrs. Rozzie McQueen, and Charlie Sanford.

YAWN

A post office appears to have been established here in April 21, 1900 under the name of Zawn with Martha E. Gorrell as the postmaster. The order was officially rescinded on June 12 of the same year, probably in order to establish the office of Yawn.

The post office at Yawn was located about mid-way between Reddoch Ferry on the Leaf River and the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad. The spelling of the postmaster's name is Martha E. Jarrell rather than Martha E. Gorrell. She served from June 22, 1900 to November 24, 1902, followed by Isaac N. Yawn, November 24, 1902 to December 24, 1904; and Viola Flynt, December 24, 1904 to January 31, 1906. On January 31, 1906 the office was closed and the mail sent to Collins.

RESOURCES

A map dated 1900, used by courtesy of Mrs. Orland Lott, and "The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge.



These students at the Willow Grove School in 1920 were identified by Sadie Rawls. Mrs. Rawls says that the school was located close to the home of Alma and Ernest Rawls.

Back row (left to right) Ernest Rawls, Sherman Mitchell, Vardaman Rawls, Lonnie Yawn, Talmadge Abercrombie, Unknown, Ida Coulter, Charity Mitchell, Helen Speed, Erma Rawls, Unknown, and principal—Eddie Waters.

Fifth row (left to right) Hulan Yawn, William Welch, _____ Leggett, Grace Mitchell, Dovie Coulter, Ruby Pickering, Velma Waters, Gladys Rawls, Velma Yawn, and Annie Louis Yawn.

Fourth row (left to right) Willena Rawls, Laura Speed, Cecil Keys, Ina Yawn, Henry Yawn, Preston McQueen, Breland Coulter, Chella Mae Pickering, Alice Williamson, Lula Coulter, Flora Yawn, Grace Rawls, Sadie Yawn, Lela Yawn, Kelly Mae Mooney, Alma Yawn, Elma Rawls, Flossie Coulter,

Minnie Yawn, Virgie Lee, and Clyde Speed.

Third row (left to right) Clara Rawls, Gustin Mooney, Irene Coulter, Iva Coulter, Bessie McQueen, Inez McQueen, Retha Knight, Lavell Biglane, Alice Leggett, Noland Yawn, Rozzie McQueen, Laura Speed, Ruby Pickering, Esther Rawls, Kelly Mooney and last three on the row are unidentified.

Second row (left to right) Unknown, Unknown, Beatrice Holifield, Alma Rawls, Unknown, Minnie Ross, Margie Pickering, Annie Bass, and Clarence Rawls.

First row (left to right) Albert Yawn, Linnie Mae Yawn, Vada Yawn, Lola Yawn, Eva Rawls, Bessie Rawls, Pauline Rawls, Unknown, Bob Yawn, Unknown, _____ McQueen, Dennis Knight, and Herbert Leggett.

Eddie Waters was the school principal and Velma Waters and Virgie Lee were teachers. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Sadie Rawls)



Section III

CIVIL WAR

When Southerners talk of "The War," it is most likely the Civil War. The four years of fighting and the many years of reconstruction that followed are, without a doubt, the most dismal time in the history of the South.

This tragic conflict is called by many names: The War Between the States, The War of the Rebellion, the War of the Secession, or The War for Southern Independence. But whatever it is called the "war was hell." This often quoted term is said to have been spoken first by the infamous Gen. William T. Sherman of the Union forces.

While there were no battles in Covington County, we did suffer. Williamsburg, then the county seat of Covington County, was the enlistment center for this area of the state, and numerous men and boys signed on there as volunteers. Ethel Knight lists in *The Echo of the Black Horn* approximately 200 volunteers. Some of these were from Jones County, as there was no enlistment center in Jones County at the beginning of the war. It is safe to say that others also joined during the long ordeal.

The following account was told to Mrs. Ruby Huff Jordan in 1938 by then 98-year old Elsie Posey of the Hot Coffee area who was present at the "volunteers farewell celebration and dinner." (Mrs. Jordan was a research writer for the WPA.)

"Soon after the outset of the War Between the States, President Davis called for volunteers. In each district some man was chosen to notify the men to report at a certain place to receive their uniforms, orders and preliminary drilling. Mr. Jessie Craft served in that capacity in the district that included Covington County. Mr. Craft lived one mile from Hot Coffee and he sent out runners to notify all the men to meet at the Cohay Okahay Bridge on a certain date.

"The mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts of these men were thrown into a wailing panic, the shock of a war-call coming to their very own was too pitiful for words; however, they courageously wiped their tears and decided to meet on that date with their braves. So word was passed for each family to bring a box of grub (food) and prepare to spend the day. On the morning of this farewell dinner, ox wagons approached the site from all directions, some having started the afternoon before, others long before dawn.

"The men who signed to go were given their uniforms and the officers who had come from headquarters to organize and drill such men soon called them to form a line. Mr. Zeb Patrick was placed as drummer, Mr. Thomas Huff, (Elsie informed me that Mr. Huff was my husband's father) was placed on a nearby stand to fid-



This reunion of Confederate soldiers was held at the Central School in Laurel. Those identified in the photo are front row: John Moore (third from right); and back row: (from left) C. M. Reddoch and Judge Jesse Pack. The others are unidentified. (Photo courtesy of Roanoke Keys)

dle and Bill Cranford was assigned to play the flute. At the officer's command the men, clad in their crisp new uniforms, swung into motion and, the officer's call of 'Forward, left right,' could be heard above the clank of the guns. . . .

"After the drill a sumptuous dinner was spread. Some 'vittles' on the menu were chicken pie, biscuits, corn bread, barbecued beef, mutton, and boiled pork hams. . . .

"After the feast the commanding officer offered the men to form another line, then amid the beat of the drum, the call of the flute and the tune of the fiddle, those braves were marched out of sight and over the hills to war." These were part of the 70,000 soldiers that Mississippi supplied to the Confederacy.

NOT EVERYONE WANTED TO GO

The 1860 census shows that there were 4,408 people in Covington County, including the section that is now Jefferson Davis County. There were 2,845 whites and 1,563 blacks. Of this number many were small "dirt farmers," who did not own slaves, who were neither loyal to the Confederacy nor the Union, and who wanted only to be left alone.

Many poor people believed that the "20 Negro Act" made the war a poor man's war. Any white man having more than twenty slaves was exempt from army duty. Some of these non-slave owning soldiers refused to fight because they didn't believe

in the cause. One of the most famous of these "deserters" was Newt Knight. Newt and his band of fellow soldiers used the area around the Reddoch's Ferry on the Leaf River as a hideout. They were hunted by both Confederates and Union soldiers using bloodhounds. Many of these dogs were choked to death by Newt's men with meat sprinkled with red pepper. Some of the renegade band were captured and hung. One village in Jones County is still known as "Cracker's Neck" due to the "neck-cracking" that the hangings produced.

HOME CONDITIONS DURING THE WAR

The War was a total war. Not only were soldiers fighting, but their families were fighting as well. Women, children, old men, and slaves were left to take on the responsibility of carrying on life as best they could. Because the South was almost totally without industries, the blockade of the railroad and water transportation was one of the main reasons for its downfall. The South was so dependent on imports from the North and from Europe that someone said, "When a Southerner dies the only thing we furnish is the corpse and the hole in the ground."

However, as is witnessed in many times of crisis, substitutes could be found. The following was written in Feb. 1937 by Mrs. Nathan Rogers and Mrs. Jewel Boyd: "The cornmeal was sifted and the bran browned and used as coffee. Other hot drinks were

made from parched sweet potatoes and okra seeds. Sassafras, sage and young raspberry leaves were used for tea. Soda was gotten from the ashes of burning corn cobs. Molasses was obtained by boiling down melon juices. Dye was made from walnut bark, hickory nut bark, and berry juices. Candles were made from tallow and beeswax and substituted for coal oil and kerosene.

"Finding a substitute for salt was not as simple. This necessity was in short supply and people dug up earth from under smoke houses and boiled it to obtain coarse salt from the dirt.

"The women continued to weave the cloth from the home-grown cotton and then to make the clothes for the whole family, including the soldiers. Because this was before sewing machines, the entire process was done by hand."

Those at home tried to keep the farms in operation, but this became increasingly difficult. Even when the chief crop, cotton, was grown, the Union blockade made selling it to Europe impossible. Much of the product was burned to keep it out of the hands of the Union.

The churches and schools were also badly hit by the war. Many preachers entered the war as chaplains. Others worked in hospitals or became agents for soldier-aid societies. There were a few churches in Covington County prior to the war—Leaf River, Williamsburg, New Hope, Santee and Sleigo being among the oldest. Money

was scarce and the churches could not pay the few remaining ministers. They turned to farming or to teaching in the schools that remained.

Many schools closed during the war, but some were able to continue with the help of female teachers, elderly men and the preachers. One of the great losses in Covington County during the War was the Zion Seminary at Seminary. (Most of the seminary's buildings were burned during the war. Some believe Union sympathizers set the fires.) This progressive school was known all over the state for its quality education. Its founder, A. R. Graves, and his sons, Alex, Amos and Z. Butler all joined the Confederacy, much to the dismay of their family in their former home in New York state.

TERRELL DRAGONS

Likewise, many other families saw all of their able-bodied men go into battle. John and Mary Terrell of Covington County had two sons who distinguished themselves for the cause of the Confederacy. Vernon La Grange Terrell was a lawyer and Covington County representative in the Legislature when the war began. He was appointed the aide to Gov. John J. Pettus. Afterwards, he went into the calvary and was elected Captain of the "Terrell Dragons." Another son, Jasper Decalb, was educated at the Zion Seminary and was a student at the University of Mississippi when it was closed at the beginning of the war. He

became a lieutenant in Capt. John T. Fairley's Company I of the Seventh Mississippi Infantry. He was sent home after the Battle of Shiloh due to ill health. After he recuperated, he joined his brother's company until the close of the hostilities. Later he received a medical degree from Tulane and returned to his family's home in Covington County to practice medicine until his death in 1905.

SURRENDER

When the last Confederate soldier had surrendered on May 4, 1865, the entire South was in a state of destruction, despair and confusion. More Americans died in this war than in any other. The death total of 529,332 compared to 116,500 in World War I and 405,400 in World War II. The North lost 364,511 and the South lost 164,821. It would be many years before any sort of order could be molded from the chaos.

RESOURCES

Material for this chapter was obtained by the WPA writings of Mrs. Ruby Huff Jordan, Maggie Pittman, Mrs. Nathan Rogers, and Mrs. Jewel Boyd; The History of the Terrell Family, provided by Irene Dickinson; the memoirs of V. O. Campbell; Mississippi: the Land and the People by John K. Bettersworth; The Echo of the Black Horn by Ethel Knight; The World Book Encyclopedia, volume 4, 1983; and Sullivan's Hollow by Chester Sullivan.

RECONSTRUCTION IN COVINGTON COUNTY AFTER "THE WAR"

The War Between the States was over. The last troops in Mississippi surrendered at Meridian on May 6, 1865, but the fighting was not over. The long years of reconstruction were a fight as well. Slavery was gone, but the problems that slavery created were not.

When "Johnny Reb" came marching home, "home" was in a state of confusion. Covington County seems to have suffered more during Reconstruction than during the war. Buildings and fields were generally in disrepair. The county, as the whole state, was under military rule. The recently-freed slaves faced confusion since their way of life was changed in every way.

The Freedmen's Bureau was organized in March 1865 to handle the adjustment process of the Blacks. This agency provided for education and medical care. However, the workers in the agency were unprepared for the mammoth task before them. Some misinformation made their job even more difficult; at one time, the freed slaves were told that the government would provide them with "forty acres and a mule."

The assassination of President Abraham Lincoln in April 1865 brought further crisis to the situation.

Since the state and local governments of the Confederacy were under a military government, local people were totally without home rule. County governments were without funds, since the citizens were unable to pay their taxes. Failure to pay taxes became so prevalent that, by the end of Reconstruction, one-fifth of the land in Mississippi had been seized for non-payment of taxes.

According to the 1939 WPA writings of Maggie Pittman, it was in 1872 "before Covington County had her first normal edition." C. M. Edmonson was elected sheriff, tax collector and assessor. Evans Hall was elected to the combined office of chancery and circuit clerk. Joseph T. Duckworth was the only justice of the peace. According to Pittman, "All three officers were among the best and most capable citizens of the county."

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

At the close of "The War," agriculture was Covington County's only industry. Cotton continued to be the main crop, but growing it was exceedingly difficult due to the unavailability of labor. Farmers sought to change the labor shortage by seeking immigrants as farm workers. The state set up the Board of Immigration and Agriculture. The board printed the *Hand-Book of Mississippi* in English, German, and Swedish. Somewhat later, a number of Chinese and Italians came to Mississippi.

Transportation of the gathered crops to market was a major problem. Covington County was not on any navigable river and was a considerable distance from the nearest railroad. (The onset of "The War" meant that the location of a railroad in the county was delayed for forty years.)

Cotton had to be hauled by ox cart to Wesson (75 miles away) or to Mobile (150 miles away). The farmers would form a wagon caravan for these trips so they could assist each other over the difficult places.

In the late 1880's farm prices dropped, and many farmers went broke. Thousands of acres of land fell into the hands of merchants who held notes on the farmers' lands.

These hard times encouraged some creative thinking. Farmers began to reorganize to improve their lot. Cooperatives were formed so that the farmers could purchase goods less expensively. Some farmers began to change crops. Vegetable crops and livestock and dairying began to increase. The first Jersey cattle were brought into Mississippi in the 1870s by Col. W. B. Montgomery, a trustee at A. and M. College at Starkville.

Lumbering became an even bigger business after the invention of the eight-wheel log wagon by John Lindsey of Laurel.

AN UNFORGOTTEN WAR

Due to the pain The War and the Reconstruction caused for all concerned, it would be understandable if the survivors had wanted to forget those who had suffered through the ordeal. This was not true then, nor is it true now. In the 1890s, the United Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy were

organized. The state began the task of caring for the "old Soldiers" of the Confederacy. In 1888, disabled veterans were allowed pensions by the Legislature. In 1890, needy veterans and veterans' widows were provided for under the new constitution. The Jefferson Davis Gulf Coast residence named Beauvoir became a home for veterans and widows of veterans.

The Covington County Chancery Clerk's Office has two record books which refer to the pensions given to the 129 soldiers and widows in this county. One book also lists the names of 80 soldiers who were on the last muster roll of Company B, 4th Mississippi Calvary. Many of these men, while not from Covington County, served under Captain Vernon LaGrange Terrell of Covington County.

Maggie Pittman, WPA writer and researcher, compiled an incomplete list of 51 of Civil War enlisted men from Covington County. This list is dated May 3, 1938. It also gives the place of birth, place of enlistment and unit in the army.

CIVIL WAR ENLISTED MEN FROM COVINGTON COUNTY

D. C. Aultman, T. C. Blount, J. W. Bryant, G. C. Buchanan, Sid Bullock, J. G. Calhoun, J. J. Carter, John R. Chain, A. J. Coulter, Andrew Pickens Davis, L. L. Davis, John T. Dees, Ed Dossett and W. M. Dossett.

Archy Fairly, J. L. Gieger, J. L. Gray, Alford Graves, A. H. Hall, Steve Howell, W. P. Jordan, R. W. Kelley, W. A. Lee, A. T. Leonard, Cullen Lott, J. W. Lott, N. W. Lott, T. W. Lott, Wm. Loper and J. L. Lowery.

Calvin McDonald, S. D. McDonald, A. McKenzie, Miles B. McLeod, H. A. D. McNeil, G. W. McRaney, R. Norwood, R. H. Powell and D. C. Rogers.

Irvin Sellers, W. P. Smith, Williams Turnage, J. T. Watkins, B. S. Watts, F. M. Watts, W. G. Watts, J. M. Welch, R. J. Welch, N. R. Whitehead, James Williamson and Daniel Yates.

LOCAL FAMILIES REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVED

Several Covington County families have diligently researched records for reports of their relatives.

Mrs. James D. Arrington has several items that belonged to her great-great-grandfather, Captain George C. Buchanan. A note in his family Bible gave him permission to bring the "mustering out pay" from Mobile for his company. There appear to be about twelve names on the list. Mrs. Arrington also has the gun, complete with bayonet, he used during the conflict.

Nelda Spell Mitchell has copies of the official military records of her great-grandfather, William Fredrick Spell. He served as a private in Company C, Eighth

Regiment of Mississippi Infantry, Confederate States of America. His last pay was received August 1863. He was not discharged, as he was home on leave after being wounded at Vicksburg. Spell was born on Oct. 6, 1838 in Rankin County and died December 18, 1905 in Covington County.

His widow, Keziah Catherine Speed Spell, received a pension every three months. It was \$32.72 in 1927; \$37.50 in 1928; and \$43.75 the first two quarters of 1930. The pension was then stopped.

Sheri Straub McNeil, presently of Mission, Kansas, has the war records of both of her great-great-grandfathers, Samuel David McDonald and Joseph Timothy Duckworth.

McDonald listed in Company B of the Mississippi Calvary in Simpson County on February 1, 1862. His whole company was captured when the Confederate forces surrendered at Citronelle, Alabama, on May 4, 1865. He died in May of 1915 at the age of 82 at his home in Covington County. His wife, Louisa Southworth McDonald (a Covington County native), applied for the widow's pension in 1915.

Joseph Timothy Duckworth enlisted at Williamsburg, Mississippi on February 22,



Confederate soldier Samuel David McDonald (front left) is shown here in his later years (he died in 1915) with his wife, Louisa Southworth McDonald (front right). Also pictured are (back row, left to right) Barney Hinigan, a boarder in their home, their son, Jasper, and their son, Loren. The young boy in the center is their grandson, Roy. (Photo courtesy of Sheri Straub McNeil)



William Fredrick Spell is shown in this photo in his Confederate Uniform when he served as a private in Company C, Eighth Regiment of Mississippi Infantry. Spell was born in Rankin County in 1838 and died in Covington County in 1905. Many of his descendants still live in this area. (Photo courtesy of Nelda Spell Mitchell)

1862, with the 6th Battalion of the Mississippi Volunteers. He was captured at Vicksburg on July 4, 1863, and signed the oath of surrender at Vicksburg on July 18, 1863. He was back in active duty in December 1863 and was again captured at Nashville, Tennessee, on December 16, 1864. He was a prisoner of war at Sandusky, Ohio, from December until his release on June 16, 1865. He returned to Covington County and was one of the first elected county officials after the state was readmitted to the Union. He was married to Jane Speed. He died March 4, 1867 at the age of 55.

There are many others from Covington County who served (an educated guess

would be about 200). Six of Thomas (Tom) Sullivan's sons were directly involved in The War. Samuel was wounded; Mark was tried and convicted of desertion, but he was given a graveside pardon by Captain George Buchanan of Covington County. Tom's grandson, Stephen, serving in his father's place, was killed at Shiloh. Tom's grandson, John Wylie, was the captain of his company.

BACK IN THE UNION

On February 17, 1870, Congress readmitted Mississippi into the Union. President Grant approved the action on February 23. This supposedly brought an end to Reconstruction. However, in reality

the process of reconstructing the educational, religious, social, governmental, and economic structures of Mississippi continues even to this day. Nobody won the war, nor the reconstruction that followed.

RESOURCES

Mississippi: The Land and the People by John Bettersworth; Randa Ray Mayfield at the Covington County Chancery Clerk's Office; LaNelle Schimpf, member of the UDC; the WPA writings of Maggie Pittman; the private papers of Mrs. James D. Arrington, Nelda Spell Mitchell, and Sheri Straub McNeil; and *Sullivan's Hollow* by Chester Sullivan.

STORYTELLING CENTERS AROUND NEWT KNIGHT

In a slower paced time, one of the favorite forms of entertainment in the South was storytelling. In summer, the location might be a front porch, complete with rocking chairs and a swing. In winter, the telling was often situated around a fire: a campfire, a glowing fireplace, or perhaps a wood-burning stove.

As our life style becomes more hurried and more television oriented, we Southerners seem to be losing the wonderful tales that were passed from one generation to another by word of mouth.

In the eastern part of Covington County many of the old tales seem to somehow include the adventures of Newton (Newt) Knight. Newt was the leader of a renegade band of perhaps 120 men who hid out in thickets, caves, and bayous along the Leaf River in Jones and Covington counties during the Civil War.

Newt never considered himself a Confederate deserter although other people called him that. He contended all he did was leave a fight he did not believe in and go back home.

Ethel Knight (Mrs. Sidney) of Hot Coffee has written in her book, *The Echo of the Black Horn*, what she considers "an authentic tale of the 'Governor' of the Free State of Jones, Newton Knight." Mrs. Knight's book was written with the help of Thomas Jefferson Knight, son of Newt Knight.

One of the stories of Newt's exploits has also been written in *Mississippi: 13 Ghosts and Jeffrey* by Kathryn Tucker Windham. Mrs. Windham contends that when Newt left the war and came home he spread the word that "he was serving as protector for his family, his kinfolks and such friends as needed him."

Every man in Knight's company had his own horn, shaped and decorated to suit his own fancy. The horns were used for communication. Newt's horn was black and it

was said that "he could make it talk." Tales about Newt Knight and his horn spread throughout South Mississippi and the man became something of a folk hero.

Newt and his men were well-known at Confederate headquarters in the state. There his reputation was not that of fearless hero, but of ruthless renegade. Although Newt's activities were more a nuisance than a menace to the Confederate cause, the man himself became such a symbol of lawless defiance that his capture became a major objective. It seemed that some Confederate officers had rather catch Newt Knight than to take U. S. Grant or W. T. Sherman into custody.

On one occasion the Rebels ambushed Newt's band at Reddoch's Ferry on the east side of Leaf River. The ferry, one of the few ways to cross the river, was located somewhat north of the present Leaf River bridge on Highway 84 East. Three of Newt's company were captured and hanged from a tree on the spot.

According to Rex Mitchell of Collins, he had heard the story of the hangings as a child and had also heard tales of the reappearance of one of the soldiers near the site of his hanging. Some people claimed that the footsteps of the man could occasionally be heard walking up and down the river's edge. Mitchell says that on two occasions he saw and heard it for himself.

He and some friends were fishing on the east side of the river by a spot called Old Cypress. They had brought their fishing gear and camping supplies in a Hoover Cart pulled by a mule. A Hoover Cart was a homemade contraption made from the back axle of an old Model A car.

After unloading, the mules were taken back across the river to the west side to spend the night in a relative's barn. If made to stay on the east side of the river it seemed that the horses or mules would become very agitated and would break loose. Oddly



CAPTAIN NEWTON KNIGHT

This is believed to be a reasonable likeness of Newton (Newt) Knight. The sketch was made by Meg O. Frost, a newspaperman with the Times Picayune, in 1924 when Mr. Knight was 101 years old. It first appeared in a pamphlet written by Thomas Jefferson Knight. Mr. Knight was a "wanted" man during much of his life and had never allowed himself to be photographed. When one anxious fellow tried once to capture him with the camera, Newt is said to have smashed the camera and the photographer both. This sketch was in the materials that belonged to Newt's son Thomas Jefferson Knight. All of Tom Knight's materials were purchased by Ethel Knight in 1913 and the copyright is recorded in volume 759, page 47, 1913. Newt Knight died in 1926. (Sketch courtesy of Ethel Knight.)

enough, dogs did not seem to be bothered by the same phenomenon as the horses.

The two times that Mitchell and his friends encountered the sound of the soldier was when Mitchell was a teenager and they were sitting around a campfire of the river bank. On the first appearance, the steps of the man could be heard around the edge of the firelight. The second time they heard the sound was on a different night, and one of the group had a carbide lamp that he shined in the direction of the sound of the footsteps, but nothing could be seen.

Mitchell says that occasionally today someone will suggest going and listening for the sounds of the footsteps again, but he never has.

Other tales of Newt Knight and his men once filled the front porches of many homes in eastern Covington County, but these stories are quickly being forgotten as the stories are no longer being retold.

RESOURCES

Rex Mitchell, Mrs. Ethel Knight, *The Echo of the Black Horn* by Mrs. Ethel Knight, and *Mississippi: 13 Ghosts and Jeffrey* by Kathryn Tucker Windham.



Halloween is a favorite time to re-tell stories of "ghosts" and to decorate accordingly. This Jack-O-Lantern family is made from citrons found growing in a pasture in Sanford. Some say this watermelon-like fruit is "good for nothing." Others have suggested that citrons can be used for target practice, to make preserves and as a treat for cattle to eat. If the pumpkin crop was slim at your house, they make a dandy substitute for Halloween decorating, as you can see. (Photo by Gwen Hitt)

REMEMBERING CHRISTMASES PAST AND PRESENT IN COVINGTON COUNTY

Christmas, the fifth season of the year, refreshes the soul and heightens the senses. There seems to be more to see, to smell, to taste, to hear, and to feel during Christmas. Memories of past celebrations flood our minds. It is the thought of Christmases past that make Christmases present so very special. Many of the rituals of the season come to us from many generations before. Every region and every family have traditions that are unique to them and make the season meaningful.

CHRISTMAS TREES

Some families wouldn't dream of having anything but a live tree and don't put it up until Christmas Eve. Others want to enjoy the fruits of their decorating labor longer and put up an artificial tree right after Thanksgiving.

Whatever kind of tree a family chooses, it is usually the focal point of their celebration. Until the last twenty-five or so years, the getting of a tree meant going to the woods and finding the perfect specimen. Generally, in our area the chosen tree would have been a cedar, although some families did choose a holly, red with berries, or a pine tree.

Once the tree was home it was placed in a bucket of wet sand and then the fun began. The decorations, usually homemade, were made from whatever materials were available.

- Sweet gum balls were wrapped in shiny foil from the inside of chewing gum or cigarette packages.

- Popcorn was strung on thread to make a garland.

- Some families wrote scripture verses on slips of paper and tied them to the tree.

- Paper dolls and paper chains were made from any colorful paper available.

- Families fortunate enough to receive Christmas cards sometimes put them on the tree.

- Occasionally, lighted candles were attached to the tree.

DECKING THE HALLS

A trip to the woods rendered many lovely materials to make even an ordinary home look festive. Pine cones, pine limbs, youpon berries, and mistletoe were put over the windows and doors and on the mantles.

Boughs of cedar could be used as were or dampened with water and sprinkled with flour. When the limbs were dry it gave a semblance of snow. Ivory Flakes soap powder could also be whipped to a thick froth and put on the limbs or even a whole tree to give the appearance of snow.

STOCKINGS AND GIFTS

It has only been in the recent past that Santa brought gifts under the tree. Formerly Santa would only fill the stockings hung

at the fire place on Christmas Eve with a piece of fruit, a piece of candy (probably a peppermint stick), nuts, raisins, and maybe a pencil. The very fortunate might find a trinket or a small toy in the stocking.

Gifts within the family were, more than likely, something handmade. During particularly hard times, Plantation Babies were made from a man's handkerchief for the girls of the family. Useful items of clothing might also be gifts. Knitted socks, scarves and mittens were always welcome.

FOOD, FOOD AND FOOD

The sight of a decorated house was an important part of Christmas, as it is today, but even more exciting were the smells of Christmas. The baking of cookies, cakes, pies, turkeys, and the ever-present refrain of "can I lick the bowl?" were hallmarks of the season.

Christmas was also a time for hog-killing which meant the making of sausages, ham, bacon and hog's head cheese. The hog's meat would join the parade of fowl and wild game at the table. The fowl was more likely to be a chicken rather than a turkey, although some families did raise turkeys or someone occasionally killed a wild one.

Desserts for the occasion were egg custards, potato pies, pecan pies and fruit cakes made from preserves. If sugar was in short supply, molasses would be used to sweeten the goodies. Molasses candy, pop-

corn balls and peanut candy were also treats of the season.

If possible, the family feast included the luxury of fresh fruit and perhaps a coconut. Some families remember having a whole hoop of cheese and a whole bunch of bananas at Christmas.

FAMILY GATHERINGS

The family feast day would most likely be at Grandma's house. "Grandpa" lived there too, but it was still called "Grandma's." The entire clan of aunts, uncles, cousins and assorted other relatives would assemble with their contributions to the groaning board which did indeed groan under the weight of the feast.

The day would surely include the reading of the Christmas story from the Bible and the singing of carols. Occasionally, "Santa" would make an appearance. His homemade suit might be long red flannel underwear, black brogan shoes and a beard made from the fall's cotton crop.

SCHOOL DAY CHRISTMAS

The school Christmas celebration was almost as much fun as the family one. The trees were gaily draped with colorful art projects, the windows covered with hand-drawn Santas, trees, stars, and angels.

The school play or pageant was an exciting event for the whole community. The stable scene always included a crudely made manger and occasionally live animals were a part of the cast. Carols of the season were sung by one and all.

The drawing or pulling of names in the classroom was a ritual to be anticipated or dreaded, depending upon your point of view. "Store bought" presents were always looked upon with awe, particularly a treasured blue bottle of Evening in Paris perfume.

CHURCH CELEBRATIONS

The churches also had Christmas plays, sometimes very simple ones and sometimes elaborate pageants replete with crepe-paper winged angels, crowned kings and a "heavenly choir."

Roanoke Keys remembers a particularly memorable Christmas in 1956 when three generations of her family were a part of the Christmas pageant at Salem Baptist Church. Mrs. Keys' father-in-law, V. E. Keys, played the part of a shepherd and the parts of Mary, Joseph and the Baby Jesus were played by Mrs. Keys, her husband, Cliff, and six-weeks-old-son, Cliff, Jr.

Churches have long been the givers of gifts to the needy and the shut-ins. Caroling to the shut-ins is also a long standing tradition in many churches.

FAVORITE CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

Several Covington Countians recall special Christmases of their past:

- Ada Miller recalls a white Christmas and the memory of waking to a roaring fire

and the smell of her mother cooking a breakfast of fresh sausage, biscuits and syrup.

- Reba Rogers remembers a white Christmas also. The year was 1928 and it was the first snow she had ever seen. She described the experience as "beautiful and wonderful."

- Clara Peterson recalls that while she came from a large family, nine girls and three boys, their stockings always had fruit, nuts and a bit of candy.

- Isabel Jordan says the year she and her sister, Ruby, got china dolls they were so excited they weren't even hungry for the Christmas goodies.

- Ruby Rogers says the best part of Christmas for her was "having the family come home from afar and enjoy Christmas dinner together."

- Drunella Lindsey recalls that after the children got up and looked in their stockings, her mother would gather the children around the breakfast table and read the Christmas story.

- W. L. Grady remembers the year when he was a young teen and his father bought him his first shot gun.

- Mrs. Lessie Crosby says that when she was about five she received a china doll and wrapped it carefully in her coat. In her haste later to go outside, she grabbed the coat and the doll fell out and broke.

- Nezzie Miller's most memorable Christmas was in the 1960s when an elderly

neighbor came to their home bringing an armful of turnips as her gift to them. She had gathered them in a chilling rain and as she handed them her gift she said, "This is all I had to give you."

CHRISTMAS TODAY

Giving is still a big part of the spirit of Christmas. We want the ones we love to be happy, but the gifts are different. Where the child of long ago may have received fruit and candy the child of today may receive a personal computer. The holiday menu is much the same, but the turkey probably will come from the grocer's freezer rather than the barn yard.

Churches, schools and organizations continue to help the less fortunate. In the 1950s Mac McInnis of Collins started a Christmas party on the Covington County Courthouse lawn where children could meet Santa (for many years Santa was played by Virgil "Shorty" Logan) and received a bag of fruit and candy. After McInnis' death in 1955, the party was continued for about 25 years as a memorial to him by the Collins Jaycees.

Although we went through a period of "theme" Christmas trees in the 50s and 60s when the style was aluminum trees with one color of ornaments, we now find more and more people returning to the farm for a fresh tree. Christmas tree farms now provide trees for the family to pick and cut down themselves.



Families are once more returning at Christmas to the farm to cut their own fresh trees. The difference now is that the trees are in neat rows and are trimmed perfectly. Ken Robey of Mize (left) receives some help from his friend Willie Humphre of Laurel as they cut a tree at the Christmas tree farm of Judy Carter Dobbs and her husband Frank Dobbs at Hot Coffee. Covington County has another tree farm, Sheehan's, at Seminary. (Photo by Gwen Keys Hitt)

Once again the ornaments are likely to include those treasures made by little hands and those precious ones passed down through the years.

Many churches and families are also including a Chrismon tree in their celebration. This evergreen tree is decorated with white and gold symbols of the Christian faith and is used by many as a teaching device concerning the true meaning of Christmas.

China-faced dolls of the past have given way to the Cabbage Patch version, but the doll is cherished just the same.

School plays are still as memorable as ever with bright-eyed angels, shepherds and wise men re-enacting the timeless story of the Saviour's birth. Church pageants are now likely to include a polished performance of a Christmas cantata by the church choir.

We've added exciting and colorful Christmas parades and instead of a mad rush on Christmas Eve to buy presents we now have a "mad rush" from the day after Thanksgiving, or even earlier in the year.

Some of the trappings of the season have changed through the years, but much has remained the same. We still cherish this time of remembering the Christ and of remembering family and friends.

RESOURCES

Members of the Senior Citizen's groups of Collins, Mt. Olive and Seminary. Kathryn Belle Speed and Ruth McInnis Breland.



Enjoying this classroom tree are two Cabbage Patch-type dolls made by Marion Leggett of Collins. This live tree was cut by the students and was decorated with simple, easy to obtain materials, much like the trees of the past generations. Sweet gum balls were covered with foil and various ornaments were made from colorful scraps of paper. Christmas cards from past years were also added. (Photo by Gwen Keys Hitt)

COVINGTON COUNTY IN WORLD WAR I

The shot that is credited with starting World War I was fired on Sunday, June 28, 1914, in Sarajevo, at that time the capital of the Austrian province of Bosnia. (Sarajevo is now in Yugoslavia and was the sight of a recent Winter Olympics.) An assassin shot and killed Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his wife Sophia. These deaths started the war in Europe.

For two years America stayed out of this European war, but in January of 1917 a German message was intercepted that indicated that Germany was trying to make an alliance with Mexico in case the United States did decide to join the war. The war was literally in our "back yard." On April 6, 1917 the United States declared war against Germany.

America was almost totally unprepared for war. Life changed from a leisurely pace to a feverish pace. All men age 21-30 were required to register for the draft; the sale of Liberty Bonds was begun; Uncle Sam ap-

peared on recruiting posters to announce "I Want You;" and soldiers and civilians alike began to sing George M. Cohan's "Over There."

A LIST OF COVINGTON COUNTIAN WHO SERVED

Covington Countians likewise began to take their place in this hurriedly declared call to arms. An incomplete list of local men that were involved as reported by family members and friends in the conflict are William Aultman, O. J. Biglane, Charlie Campbell, V. O. Campbell, Charlie Crosby, Ed Ellis, Leo Faler, Lucien Faler, Eldry Flynt, John C. Flynt, William C. Flynt, J. T. Holloway, Katie Horton, Herom Idom, Donnie Little, Fred Lowry, Clifton Lott, Chris Magee, Doyle Mayfield, John McCormick, Marvin McNair, Earl McRaney, Preston Mooney, Archie Morris, Horace Napier, W. C. Pope, Ray Robertson, Quitman Rutland, V. O. Smith, Allen Porter Speed, Bethea

Speed, George F. Speed, Grover Upton, Walter Upton, Abner Yates, Dennie Yates, and Tom Yates.

At the Covington County Chancery Clerk's office there are approximately 350 honorable discharges recorded, with dates that would appear to mean the soldiers were involved in World War I.

A WORLD WAR I RECRUIT'S STORY

George Franklin Speed, born in Covington County on September 30, 1895 (now a resident of San Angelo, Texas) tells of his experiences as a new recruit. His memories are fairly similar to the experiences of others in that frantic time.

GEORGE FRANKLIN SPEED

"We went to Camp Shelby, Miss. for Recruit Training. We started taking shots for everything for some 10 days, then were in hard training until September, then we received orders that we would be going over-seas for combat service. In the meantime, I was ordered to accompany one of our boys to the hospital, with his equipment, and it turned out that he had the Mumps! After we boarded the Troop Train, I awoke one morning in Washington D. C. with the Mumps!

There was another boy with us too, his name was Otto Armitage—so when we rolled into Baltimore they had an ambulance waiting our arrival and we were taken to Ft. McHenry Hospital. The place was jammed with soldiers as the Flu was at it's worst, so Otto was admitted in a Ward with Spinal-meningitis, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria—the works! However, as luck would have it, I was OK and in 3 or 4 days was released—but when I went to check out, all my equipment was missing so I was stuck there for 30 days, as I would be charged if I had new equipment issued.

It was a long time to lounge around in my pajamas, so later called at the check-in office and they told me it was there. At that I dressed in my O.D.'s and left for Long Island, New York and checked in at Camp Mills, an Embarkation Camp at that time. It was raining and cold and I've never seen so many soldiers! I was given a folding cot without a mattress, but I had three blankets in my Duffie Bag, so used one for a mattress, slept in my clothes, and covered myself with the other two. I kept warm by shivering all night, then got up in the morning and found that the bath was an open top shower with cold water!

With a few foul words I made it, then when I got to the Chow line, I had to eat my oatmeal in the open, standing up! Luck was with me though, for I only had to stay a short time at Camp Mills.

From there we transferred to Camp Merit, N.Y. There I had a warm barracks, and was assigned to a Casual Company, made up of boys that had been detained in hospitals, etc. The camp was close to a



W. T. Aultman, (shown) was a student at Mississippi College when he was inducted into the army on April 7, 1918. He was in the band at Mississippi College and many of the band members were retained as a group when they were assigned. He reached France four days after the Armistice had been declared on November 11, 1918. Many of the approximately 350 Covington County World War I soldiers served in France. (Photo courtesy of W. T. Aultman, and Dan Aultman)



W. T. Aultman, a World War I soldier, (left) is shown at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana with an unidentified soldier. Camp Beauregard Training Camp location for several Covington County soldiers. (Photo courtesy of W. T. Aultman and Dan Aultman)

beautiful city, where the streets were paved with cobblestones, and when we would go out for exercise you would see the sparks fly from those stones when struck by our hob-nail shoes!

Finally we got orders for over-seas duty on Nov. 9, 1918. We were ordered not to go to bed, but to be ready on a minutes notice to hike 14 miles to Alpine landing and from there to take a Ferry across to Hoboken to load on a British Freighter. Well bad luck plagued us again! About 5 o'clock that afternoon one of my jaw teeth began to ache and it was impossible to get a dentist at that hour. Just as I was about to take off in a running fit, I thought of a needle in my Duffle Bag, so I got it out and lanced that abscess, and it eased instantly.

I went to sleep until we were ordered to line up for the hike at daylight. We crossed the Bay to this ship—no breakfast, no dinner, just a canteen of water, so we were hungry! Before we boarded the boat, the Salvation Army came along with a bun with a raisin in the center of it, and did it taste good?!

The best I can remember there were 5000 men on the boat. Our company was next to the top deck and the odor was so bad that the air pumps didn't help any. I had an old hammock to sleep in, so I slept on a pile of life-preservers."

THE HOME FRONT'S CONTRIBUTION

While the boys trained, the home folk were busy doing their part as well. A WPA writing on June 5, 1936 states that the Red Cross of Covington County was very active. A sewing room, a knitting room, and a room where bandages and dressings were made were immediately established. The United Daughters of the Confederacy established the first sewing room. They also sent money to a French orphan, as did the Order of the Eastern Star.

A detailed list, dated November 1917, shows that people all over the county were doing their part. The communities of Williamsburg, Salem, Sanford, Seminary, Calhoun, Curry Creek, and Cold Springs were listed as donating socks, pajamas, sheets, shirts, towels, aprons, pillow cases, wash cloths, wristlets, mufflers, water bottle covers, sponges, gun shot packs, comfort kits, and surgical dressings.

Many money-making projects were used, including selling peanuts and giving the proceeds to the Red Cross. A World Saving Society was organized at Cold Springs by Mr. and Mrs. John H. Wood. Meetings were held each week and War Saving Stamps were brought by members of the society to help carry on the war effort.

LIFE ON THE BOAT TO "OVER THERE"

Charlie Campbell enlisted on October 4, 1917 as a private and after short stays at Camp Pike, Arkansas and Camp Merritt, New Jersey he sailed out with nine ships filled with soldiers.

"While on our way to England about twenty of our boys died on the boat. They were wrapped in canvas, then in the American Flag. A simple service was said for all of them and the bodies were placed on a shoot, one after the other and pushed into the water.

"Burials after the battles were even worse. The dead would be piled up, trenches dug and the soldiers buried in this crude way."

LIFE IN THE TRENCHES

Berlin D. Bryant, a Covington Countian, was the first from the county to go overseas and the last to return. In an interview in 1936 he tells about his battle experiences as a medic.

I was transferred to the Medical Department, being disqualified for line service account of German mumps. My duty was to operate a Triage Hospital, being located in third line trench, receiving all patients, rendering necessary first aid, giving tetanus, and evacuating to Base Hospitals. Our

hospital, consisting of eighty-three men, including officers, handled 6,666 patients in ten days, having only twenty to die in the hospital.

"Two days of that time we couldn't enter any patients, for the reason we were being shelled by German Artillery. One high explosive shell made a direct hit on the operating room, destroying everything in it, but only one person was wounded, she being one of the famous McAlister twin sisters, serving with the Salvation Army. Regardless of wound in hip she continued in service two days and nights before giving up to be sent to a Base Hospital.

"This battle marked the turning point of the war. Our next orders were to advance, by truck, as fast as possible in pursuit of the enemy. After riding for two days and nights, eating when we could, we stopped in what was the little town of Nowart, where filth reigned supreme, having been made so by the hasty retreat of the Germans. Horses and men were found dead on the streets. In this little town is where we were when the "Happy Medium" was reached on the 11th month, 11th day and the 11th hour of 1918. Artillery was constant in action until this time when it became as silent as the dead.

"We moved from Newart to Verdun, where we were billeted in old French Barracks, where nothing was left but concrete floor and shattered walls. We made our beds with two OD blankets on the concrete floor, one on top and one on the bottom. Leaving there on the march for the Rhine River, traveling by day and camping at night, sleeping on the ground. We camped one night at the place famously known as "Dead Man's Hill." The sky was overshadowed with clouds the next morning and the scenery of our camp resembled a cemetery for during the night a six inch snow had fallen and covered us.

"On continuing our march to the Rhine, we reached Cobelentz, Germany on December 4th 1918. Crossed the Rhine at high noon, going to Dernbach, Germany, took possession of a Catholic hospital, then operated a Divisional Hospital until June 19th 1919, when we were ordered to break camp, repair to the line of the Neutral Zone, where we stood guard awaiting for peace to be officially signed, as it was on the 21st day of June 1919.

"Peace being signed, we returned to our former quarters and WISHED WE COULD COME HOME. Until August, when we finally launched out in the long trend back to USA., arriving at Brest, France, where we were put through disinfection, or delousing plant, before boarding ship. We sailed from Brest, France 22nd day of August 1919, arrived at Hoboken, N.J., September 4th 1919. We paraded New York City September 10th, fully equipped for war, which was the only

Division to stage such a parade in USA. Then we proceeded by truck to Washington, D.C., where we paraded again as in New York. From there we went to Camp Meade, Md., where for the duration of war men and draftees were discharged."

AFTER THE ARMISTICE

The "doughboys" came home thinking that they had done what President Wilson had declared, and that now "The world was safe for democracy." This was not the case and in less than twenty years we were involved in World War II, and later the Korean Conflict and the Viet Nam War. Many of the soldiers who have bravely fought have returned home to be active members of patriotic veterans' organizations.

One of these active "vets" is a Covington Countian by choice. W. C. Pape moved to Covington County in April of 1954 after having served in World War I, where he was gassed, and again in World War II. In the second war he met a Mississippi girl who was an Army WAC. They later married and returned to her home state.

Since being in this county Mr. Pape has

for 23 years placed flags on the graves of veterans, and given numerous flags to various churches and organizations.

Mr. Pape, himself a recipient of the Purple Heart and a special citation from President Woodrow Wilson, became interested in placing a marker to memorialize Covington County's only Congressional Medal of Honor recipient.

Mack A. Jordan was killed in Korea in 1951 as he held the enemy at bay, allowing his unit to retreat to safety. His body was returned to Covington County in 1952, but it was not until 1976 that a monument was placed on the county courthouse in Jordan's memory. Mr. Pape was instrumental in having this erected.

FEW WORLD WAR I VETERANS REMAIN

Probably, fewer than ten World War I Veterans are still alive in Covington County. Their stories should not be lost.

RESOURCES

The WPA writings of Viola Flynt and Dona Broom, 1936; Opal Speed and George F. Speed; *World Book Encyclopedia*, vol. 21, 1983; W. C. Pape; Dan Aultman; V. O. Campbell; and La Nelle Schimpf.



W.C. Pape, shown in his World War I uniform, moved from California to Covington County in 1954, and has been very active in local veteran affairs. Mr. Pape was instrumental in having a marker placed on the courthouse lawn in honor of the county's only Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, Mack Jordan. Jordan was killed in the Korean conflict. (Photo courtesy of W. C. Pape)

BLACK SCHOOLS IN COVINGTON COUNTY

The history of the Black schools in Covington County is very similar to the history of the White schools in that in the early years of the county there were many small schools. As transportation became more accessible, there was consolidation of these schools and in 1955 there were three Black schools in the County. They were Lincoln at Mount Olive, Hopewell in the Hopewell Community, and Carver at Collins.

The following history of these schools is based on a masters thesis written by Beauford H. Barron, and submitted to Jackson State College in May of 1958. Mr. Barron's thesis is titled "A Study of the Development of Negro Schools in Covington County, Mississippi," Mr. Barron was at that time the principal of the Lincoln Consolidated High School

THE NEGRO SCHOOLS IN COVINGTON COUNTY BEFORE 1945 HOPEWELL HIGH SCHOOL

Hopewell School is located in the section of the county known as "Negro Ridge." The establishment of this section of Covington County is attributed to two former slaves, Pear Keys and Levi Booth. They were not only proud of their freedom from slavery but were also eager to provide educational opportunities to members of the Negro race residing in the Hopewell community.

A one-teacher school was opened in 1869 to train Negro children in the knowledge of the three R's and their use to them in their everyday undertakings. The enrollment in this school was twenty-four students.

In 1910, this grammar school became a two-teacher type school which lasted until 1921. New arrivals in the "Ridge" increased the enrollment. By 1921 it became necessary to increase the faculty to five teachers. The school building had to be enlarged at a cost of \$2,500.

Between 1921 and 1931, Vocational Agriculture and Home Economics Education were added to the curriculum. This took place during the principalship of McCaskill. The school's name was changed to Hopewell Vocational School in 1931.

In 1934, a combination Vocational Agriculture and Home Economics building was erected and equipped at an estimated cost of \$3,000.

On September 2, 1940, Jones Chapel and Shady Oak schools consolidated with the Hopewell school. This made another increase in the enrollment, necessitating more classrooms and teachers. The school had an enrollment of approximately 350 students and eleven teachers; with buildings, equipment, and land valued at approximately \$15,000.



This is the Hopewell High School and the Old Hopewell Baptist Church as they appeared in the early 1940s. The church is to the left, the home economist and agricultural building is in the center and the school classroom building is on the right. (Photo courtesy of Elva Barnes)

In the light of prevailing economic and social factors in the "Ridge," the school has made progress. The predictions and efforts put forth by Keys and Booth show conclusively that they were not in vain. The citizens in this community take pride in telling visitors of the history of this school, and they have played a valiant role in helping to make it what it is today.

PEOPLE'S HIGH SCHOOL

On August 5, 1902, Thomas and Amanda Draughn deeded to the Colored Methodist Church of America forty acres of land in Section 3, Township 8, Range 17 to be used for school purposes. This land is located in the Mount Pleasant community which is six miles west of Mount Olive, Mississippi. The value of this purchase was \$150.

On this land was erected a three-teacher type frame school building, two dormitories, one for boys and one for girls.

Gilliespie, a Methodist minister, was elected to serve as the first school principal. The length of the school term was eight months. This school was known as the Peoples High School. The curriculum consisted of grades one through ten.

Blackburn served as principal of the school from 1910 to 1920. The first graduating exercise was held in 1918. This year marked the beginning of students leaving the community for college.

In 1921, a five-teacher type Rosenwald schoolhouse and teacher's home were built at a cost of \$3,000. The school was approved by the State Accrediting Commission as a two-year high school during the administration of Clark. Vocational Agriculture became a vital feature of the

school curriculum. The name was changed from The Peoples High School to Covington County Training School in 1921 and placed in a separate school district. This continued to be a tenth grade school until 1936.

In 1936, the school was approved for four years of high school work. Vocational Home Economics was added to the curriculum.

In 1940, the name was changed from Covington County Training School to Linwood Vocational School. The curriculum consisted of instruction in grades one through ten, or two years of high school work. The enrollment was not sufficient to support four years of high school work. The length of the school term was always eight months.

In 1948, a new school district was created which comprised the New Prospect, Oak Hill, Mount Olive and Linwood schools. In the consolidation of the schools the site of the school was placed in the town of Mount Olive, Mississippi.

BETHLEHEM BOUIE SCHOOL

In 1870 Francis Watts gave his ex-slaves two acres of land. On this two acres of land the ex-slaves erected a church and named it Bethlehem Bouie. School was taught in this building and was known as Bethlehem Bouie School. The school remained in the church until 1932 when the patrons were able to raise \$300.00 and build a school house separate from the church. In 1935 a storm blew the school away. The Covington County school board donated \$350 to build another to replace the one that was destroyed by the storm. Classes were taught at Bethlehem Bouie every year from

1935 until 1948, when the students were transferred to Sumrall for three years. In 1951 all the students were transferred to Collins, Mississippi. Throughout the period of these transferrals, this was always a one-teacher school with grades one through eight.

FRIENDSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOL

The Friendship Public School began in May 1878 under a brush arbor. In 1879 the community people built a one-room log cabin in which school was held until 1883. The community erected a one-room frame building with a large open fireplace. The enrollment began to increase and by 1890 another room was added to the building. This building remained until 1920 when a two-room Rosenwald building was constructed. This building became so delapidated that the community dismantled the building in 1946. It was the wish of some of the people to consolidate the school with the Linwood School in the Mt. Pleasant community. Because of some misunderstanding, the consolidation failed and the community had to rebuild the school building at Friendship. School was taught there until 1952 when the school was consolidated with Carver Central High School at Collins.

NEW HOPEWELL SCHOOL

In 1885 a one-teacher type school was organized at New Hopewell in a log cabin on a farm that was owned by a Negro Bash Barnes. In 1892 the community purchased two acres of land and built a church at a cost of about \$1,000. School was taught in the church until 1910. In 1910, a two-teacher type school house was built at a cost of about \$800. School was taught at New Hopewell until 1950 when the school was consolidated with Hopewell Vocational School.

ROCKY VALLEY SCHOOL

In 1890 a school was started at Rocky Valley in a one-room log cabin worth about \$100. In 1909 the school was moved into a church called Pillar Rock. In 1917, the school was moved into a new church called Rocky Valley. This building cost about \$1,000. The school remained there until 1950 when it was consolidated with the Hopewell and Wall schools. High school students were transferred to Hopewell and grammar school students to the Wall School.

LILLY VALLEY SCHOOL

Lilly Valley School had its beginning in the Lilly Valley church around 1890. Since the Negroes of the community were tenants, they did not stay in one place very long. Some years the enrollment was large enough for two teachers and other years only one. The school remained in the church until 1950. The students were transferred to Hopewell School.

In 1895 a school was organized in a farm house owned by a Negro named John Hooks. The school was called the Line School. About two years later a log cabin with a large open fireplace was built for a schoolhouse. The people of the community began to see the need of a better school. They discussed among themselves the question of a location for a better school site. Some thought of building the school on sixteen section land; others thought it unwise to do so because they feared losing controlling power over the school. In 1907, Ike Walker, a Negro landowner gave two acres of land for the school site. A one-teacher type frame building was erected on this land. The name of the school was changed to New Prospect School. In 1911, the enrollment had increased from forty to eighty-five so another room had to be added

and two teachers employed. In 1921, a three-room Rosenwald building was constructed and three teachers employed. The enrollment fluctuated; up one year and down another year. Some years three teachers were employed; other years only two. In 1942 a verbal consolidation agreement was made by the trustees of New Prospect School and Linwood School to transfer the children in the New Prospect community to the Linwood School. This consolidation agreement lasted about five years. In 1947 the patrons of the New Prospect School decided to reopen their old school. They were not satisfied with bad roads and poor bus operations. One teacher was employed as there were forty-eight students in the reopened school. In 1948 a permanent consolidation agreement was made with the Lincoln School trustees of Mount Olive. This closed the New Prospect School.

SHADY OAK SCHOOL

The Shady Oak School was opened in 1897. This was a one-teacher school. The cost of the building was about \$100. This building was constructed on Dock Posey's land. In 1917 one room was added to the original building. The enrollment at the school had grown from fifty to one hundred and ninety-two students; consequently three teachers had to be employed. In 1927 the school was moved into Shady Oak church, while a new school was being constructed. This year, 1927, the community succeeded in raising \$1000 in donations and offerings and bought three acres of land from Dock Posey. The patrons of the community constructed a three-teacher type building. In 1945 the school was consolidated with Hopewell Vocational School.

WALL SCHOOL

Wall School was organized in 1899. The first year a brush arbor was used for the building. The next year, 1900, a one-room log cabin was built for church and school. This building served for twenty-five years as church and school.

The Kola Lumber Company was located in an adjacent community to the Wall community. This company employed a large number of white workers. A large building was used for a school house for white children. In 1920 the company ceased to operate the sawmill. The patrons of the Wall School purchased the building for \$500 and with the aid of the Rosenwald Fund built a three-teacher type school. This school operated until 1952 when the school was consolidated with Carver Central High School at Collins.

MOUNT OLIVE SCHOOL

In 1900, a school was started at Mount Olive in a Masonic Lodge Hall known as the Lucas Building. At the end of the first



This photo was taken in the early 1940s in front of the home economics and agricultural building at Hopewell High School. Those who can be identified are Principal and Mrs. C. F. Edwards (extreme left) and Rev. G. G. Booth (fifth from the left), who was once the pastor of Old Hopewell Church. (Photo courtesy of Elva Barnes)

school year, 1901, the school was moved to the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church for one year. In 1903, the school was moved to the south side of town and was known as the South-side School. A small building was erected at Saint Paul Baptist Church at a cost of about \$300. This building was used for the school house. In 1920 three acres were purchased and a three-room Rosenwald building was constructed. The cost of the building was \$2000. The school remained a three-teacher school until 1947 when the school district was made a consolidated district and was named Lincoln Consolidated School.

COLLINS SCHOOL

In 1904 a committee of nine men met to organize a school for the Negro children of Collins. This meeting was held in Macedonia Baptist Church. In 1905 the school was opened in a private house owned by a Negro named Bounds with an enrollment of twenty-three students. In 1907 the school enrollment had increased to seventy-six students. This private house was too small to accommodate this enrollment. The school was moved on some land that was given by Richard Hall, a Negro living at Collins. The building served as school and church and was valued at about \$300. In 1924 a three-teacher type Rosenwald building was built at a cost of \$2000. This building was replaced in 1938 when a four-teacher type building was built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The school remained in this building until 1952 when the community bought nine acres of land and built the Carver Central High School.

JONES CHAPEL SCHOOL

Jones Chapel School was organized in 1907 in the Jones Chapel church. This was a one-teacher school with grades one through eight and remained so until 1945. The fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades

were consolidated with Hopewell Vocational School in 1945. The remaining grades of the school were consolidated with Hopewell in 1950.

WILLIAMSBURG SCHOOL

Williamsburg School had its beginning in 1907. A vacant house on Charlie Edison's place was used for the school house. The community purchased a half acre of land in 1908 and built a building at a cost of \$150. In 1918 the school was moved into the church. The enrollment increased; two teachers were employed. A Rosenwald two-teacher type building was constructed in 1924 at a cost of \$2,000. A storm struck the community in 1928. The school was so badly damaged, it had to be rebuilt. A two-room building was built by the community at a cost of \$1,000. In 1952 the school was consolidated with Carver Central High School at Collins.

BYRD CHAPEL SCHOOL

In 1920 a small building was erected on the Byrd Plantation for use as a church and school. The school received its name from the owners of the plantation, the Byrd Brothers, and was called Byrd Chapel. In 1933 the Negro families moved from the plantation. The school was closed. In 1936 Negroes began to move into the community in such numbers that a request was made to the trustees of the Mount Olive Separate District for a school. The school was reopened. In 1940 one of the Byrd Brothers needed his building to store feed and hay for his cattle. The Negroes bought two acres of land in another location and built another school. This building was used for church and school and was known as Oak Hill. The school was consolidated with Lincoln Consolidated School in 1948.

PINE HILL SCHOOL

Pine Hill School was located on the Hemeter farm. This school was in operation for about six years from 1940 to 1946.

After 1946 the school children were transported to Sumrall in Lamar County. In 1948 all of the Negro families had moved away. The school ceased to operate.

SANFORD SCHOOL

Sanford School was organized in 1935 in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1937 the school was moved to the Masonic Hall in Sanford, Mississippi. In 1940 the community raised \$1,000 and moved the school house on sixteen section land in Covington County. School was maintained on the sixteen section land until 1952 when the school was consolidated with Carver Central High at Collins, Mississippi.

LUX LINE SCHOOL

Lux Line School was taught in a small building that served as church and school on the Granberry Plantation. The school operated from 1940 to 1946. In 1946, the Negro labor moved away from the plantation taking all the school children and the school was closed. There was no record available as to the number of children who attended this school."

The minutes of the Covington County School Board show that on June 4, 1948 the Lincoln Consolidated School was created from several smaller schools in the Mount Olive area. On December 7, 1951 the Carver Consolidated School was created for the Collins area. These two schools, along with the Hopewell School, were the only schools serving a student enrollment of 1,650 in 1954.

In January of 1970 all the schools in Covington County were integrated with students in schools at Collins, Hopewell, Mount Olive and Seminary.

RESOURCES

"A Study of the Development of Negro Schools in Covington County, Mississippi" by Beauford H. Barron, May 1958; and the Covington County School Board.

COVINGTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE

During the 180 years since the first settlers came to this area, the land has been the center of survival and continues to be so. Agriculture is big business. The value of production in Covington County in 1983 was \$19,462,267.

Covington's first settlers found a land still covered in virgin pine forests. The Choctaw Indians here at the time lived in harmony with the land, using its products and clearing small plots for growing food. The settlers continued to live very much in the same manner as the Indians, but began gradually to clear larger areas for planting. The small farm was the way of life in the rolling hills of pine forests until the turn of the century.

Big lumber companies moved in around 1900 and began to cut the forests, leaving the land uncovered, unprotected and in a state where it could easily erode. After the lumbermen left to find other forests, the farmers experimented with various crops such as strawberries, cucumbers, and sweet potatoes. Some fruit orchards were planted during this time as well.

In the late 20s and 30s it became apparent that all the top soil would be lost without some assistance to the farmers. Many farm-related government agencies were begun or extended during this time, including the Farmers Home Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, the Agricultural Stabilization and Con-

servation Service, the County Extension Service and the Mississippi Forestry Commission.

The preservation of the soil became a necessity to survival. Cover crops and grassy waterways were emphasized and reforestation was begun. The present Mississippi Forestry Commission at Mount Olive Nursery (the first of its kind in Mississippi) was established in 1939 to make this reforestation possible.

During the years since 1930, Covington County farmers have been somewhat cyclic in the change of money crops. Cotton was big business at one time with as many as seven gins in the county. As late as the 1960s, there were three gins in Collins.



Timber has for many years been an important crop in Covington County. In 1962 these enormous logs were on the way to the Rhymes Veneer Inc. then located at Kola. After a fire in the Rhymes mill on January 14, 1966, the operation was modernized and moved to Highway 49 South, just below Collins. (Photo courtesy of Holden Rhymes)

In the 1950s the trend was toward dairying, and large herds of dairy cattle were brought in from the Great Lakes dairying areas. It seemed as if every farmer was building a cinder block barn to house a dairy. Today three dairies exist in the county.

Dairy cattle have been replaced with beef cattle. Our soils are suited for the growth of pastureland and the lower maintenance of beef cattle was good for the ever increasing number of part-time farmers. Today there is a newer trend toward the installation of veal lots for growing veal calves. There are approximately 12 such units in the county now.

In the 1970s, the swing was toward soybeans with the high planting acreage in the county reaching 15,000. Currently we have about 8,000 acres in beans. Our land can grow almost any product, but yields are not as good as other areas with better soils and flatter areas.

With the coming of the poultry processing plant to Collins in 1963 the poultry industry became the main agri-business in the area. This self-contained industry hatches chicks, delivers them to contract farmers, and processes them for distribution to the southeast United States, Puerto Rico, the Middle East and the Orient. 81,700,000 chicks were hatched in fiscal 1984, with 30,317,000 chickens processed. According to Sanderson Farms chief accountant, Dan Nicovich, the annual payroll for the plant's 650 employees is six million dollars. There are 42 contract poultry farmers in Covington County.

The 1960s brought another change to farming as chemical fertilizers became easily available. While this availability was a major boost for the farmer, it also had some detrimental effects. As the farmer began to rely on chemicals, he began to

omit the basic good farming practices he had known such as cover crops, and the use of barnyard fertilizer. The land began to lose many of its organic properties.

According to Bob Hamill, of the Soil Conservation Service Office, "We forgot the basics and we are paying for it now." Hamill's office, in coordination with other groups, is still fighting the battle of erosion. The HOT (Hold Our Topsoil) program is currently offering information and assistance to farmers in this area.

Jimmy Rogers of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, says that while our land is considered good rolling hills, we have misused the land. The sandy soils must have some cover crops in order to keep the land from washing away. The crop that works best for us seems to be growing pine trees. It is generally agreed that the current and future trend in Covington County will be toward the product we grow best, pine trees.

We are located in the Wood Basket of the World. The southeastern United States has a long growing season, and an ideal climate for growing pines. Mississippi is also fortunate that we have access to water transportation on the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1983, according to Hamill, 59% of our 266,240 acres were in forest lands, primarily privately owned. Hezzie Wilson, county forester with the Mississippi Forestry Commission, believes that in the near future it will be 65%. The number of pine seedlings planted has doubled in eight years. There should be over 1½ million planted this year (1985).

The remaining 41% of land in Covington County is 22% pastureland, 14% cropland,

and 5% miscellaneous. This 5% includes 3,676 acres of waterways.

Today's farmer in Covington County is basically part-time. While the average size of farms is increasing, it is still relatively low at 200 acres. There are approximately twelve full-time farm operations in Covington County and even some of these have other incomes.

In order to survive as a farmer today it is necessary that one know more and be able to use the land more wisely. Farmers, full-time and part-time, are using more technical knowledge to stay on top of the changes in the farm business.

We are returning to the product that our land grows best, timber. A 10-20 year timber investment pays high yields, and fits the low maintenance needs of the part-time farmer. In addition, soil value is vastly improved, the land can be used for recreation as the trees grow and we are meeting the ever-increasing need for more wood.

The cycle seems to have been completed. We are once more returning the land to forests, but with a difference. This time the forest can bring in a money crop every ten years.

RESOURCES

Information for this article was obtained from Fred Baker, County Extension Agent, James Clark of the Farmers Home Administration, Bob Hamill of the Soil Conservation Service, Jimmy Rogers of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Olon Ross of the Mississippi Forestry Commission Nursery at Mount Olive, and Hezzie Wilson of the Mississippi Forestry Commission. All of these men work in Covington County.



The 157,167 acres of woodlands in Covington County makeup 59% of our land area. This renewable product is a major industry in our county and will probably continue to be so. These lands also lend themselves to recreational use during the ten to twenty years needed for the crop to be ready to harvest. (Photo courtesy of Bob Hamill)

MIKE CONNER, COVINGTON COUNTY'S ONLY GOVERNOR (1932-1936)

Martin Sennett (Mike) Conner is the only Mississippi governor to have come from Covington County. The citizens of Seminary, the "home town" of Conner, take great pride in this fact.

Jerry Windsor's, *History of Seminary, Mississippi* gives an overview of Conner's life. This brief biography is reprinted by permission of Jerry Windsor.

"Martin Sennett Conner, the forty-fourth governor of the State of Mississippi, was born in Hattiesburg on August 31, 1891. "Mike" was the son of Oscar Weir Conner, Sr., and Holly Gertrude (Sennett) Conner. O. W. Conner, Sr., was in business with his brothers in Hattiesburg until 1901 when he and his family moved to Seminary. Conner was general manager of the Conner Lumber Company, president of the O. W. Conner Mercantile Company, and engaged in extensive farming interests.

Martin Sennett Conner came to Seminary at age nine and was reared there. He completed all the work offered at the Seminary school at the age of fourteen, and in that the school was not accredited, the elder Conner hired T. W. Cranford, a local attorney and head of the Seminary school, to tutor him. Annie Kate Jackson, in an unpublished Master's thesis at Mississippi State College in 1950, "The Political Rise of Martin Sennett Conner," suggests that it was T. W. Cranford that was the main source of inspiration for the later accomplishments of Governor Conner.

Conner was voted the "greenest freshman" of the year at the University of Mississippi when he entered at the age of fourteen. He put emphasis on public speaking and became a leader in campus politics. Because of his Irish ancestry, he got the nickname of "Sure, Mike" and this is the way it is listed in the University of Mississippi annual of 1912.

Mike was president of his senior class and graduated in 1910 at the age of 19. In 1912 he graduated from the law school having the highest scholastic record that had been made at the university up to that time. Mike went on to Yale for a more advanced law course and received his L.L.B. *cum laude* from Yale in 1913. Conner served as president of the Yale Senate while there and also edited the law publication, *Calhoun Affairs*.

At the age of twenty-one, Conner had completed his education at Seminary, University of Mississippi, University of Mississippi Law School and the Yale Law School.

Conner returned to Seminary and opened a law office in 1913. He ran for the Legislature in 1915 and was later elected as Speaker of the House. At 25 he was the



Martin Sennett "Mike" Conner was governor of Mississippi from 1932-1936. The Seminary native is remembered as one of the most courageous, capable and foresighted of Mississippi's modern statesmen.

(Photo from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History)

youngest Speaker of the House to serve up until that time and he retained this position for ten years. John K. Bettersworth in *Mississippi Yesterday and Today* believed that Conner would have run for the governorship of the state before age thirty if it had not been prohibited by law. Conner was a bitter political enemy of Theodore G. Bilbo, but was elected Governor in 1931 after two previous tries.

It is of interest to note that it was through Conner that the state sales tax was begun and Mississippi was the first state in the Union to adopt this. When Conner came into office the state was more than twelve million dollars in debt and when he left office he left a balance of \$3,243,661.00 in the state treasury. The governor was criticized and almost mobbed for beginning the sales tax, but it put Mississippi on sound financial footing.

After serving as Governor, he was elected as the first Commissioner of the Southeastern Conference N.C.A.A. where

he served for several years. Governor Conner died on Saturday, September 16, 1950, in Jackson and is buried in Lakewood Memorial Park."

Conner was married to Alma Graham, also of Seminary, and they had one daughter, Lady Rachel (Mrs. R. A. Biggs, Jr.). The Conner family occupied the Governor's Mansion during a period of unparalleled economic hardship (1932-1936). Men often appeared at the back door of the Mansion begging for food and clothing. They were never turned away. The Governor was forced to use his office in the Mansion more frequently than his predecessors due to the long lines of job seekers at his Capitol office hoping to find employment in State government.

The state treasury had been depleted and the breakdown of the national credit system precluded the borrowing of funds even to operate the state government. The state was even unable to pay its teachers and public officials.

Desperate measures were needed and he took desperate measures, even though it meant that he and his family were at times in personal peril. He recommended a broad program of industrial development and agricultural diversification which marked a new departure in Mississippi's economic history. Though highly controversial, Conner's legislative program was enacted and four years later he retired from office with a three million dollar treasury surplus.

His outstanding contribution to Mississippi and his distinguished and capable leadership were recalled by the Mississippi delegation to the United States Congress on the Monday after his death on Saturday, September 16, 1950. Their tributes were read into the *Congressional Record* on that day.

RESOURCES

Clarion Ledger, January 16, 1940; *Clarion Ledger*, September 19, 1950; *History of Seminary, Mississippi* by Jerry Windsor; *Jackson Daily News*, September 24, 1950; *The News Commercial*, September 21, 1950; and the WPA research of an unknown writer, circa 1940.



Mike Conner, shown here with his wife Alma Graham Conner during this inauguration parade in January of 1932, assumed the office of governor during one of the blightest of economic times in Mississippi. When his term ended the state budget war balanced with a surplus in the treasury.

(Photo from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History)

COVINGTON COUNTY HOSPITAL

The idea of a hospital in Covington County was conceived some thirty-eight years ago by a small group of citizens, spearheaded by the Collins Rotary Club and the Collins Jaycees with much leadership given by Dr. C. P. Crenshaw. The idea met with opposition for several years, but the hospital finally became a reality on July 1, 1951.

Based on the fact that the Federal Government and State would pay at least two-thirds of the cost, the group appealed to the Covington County Board of Supervisors for a bond issue to pay the remaining one-third, with the original total cost for a 25-bed hospital being \$266,000.00.

It was later learned that the federal and state governments would pay more than their originally designated share, if the county would only pay \$67,000.

The proposal was presented to the voters of Covington County and it was approved. The bonds were sold in 1948 and the first major step in securing the hospital was history.

Plans for the building were drawn by Landry and Matthes, Architects of Hattiesburg, and presented for approval to the Mississippi Commission on Hospital Care, now the Mississippi Health Care Commission, under whose supervision the hospital was not only built, but is still operated.

After the approval of the plans a committee from this Commission came to Col-

lins to select a suitable site. A number of sites were available, but the only one the committee would approve was that owned by Dr. and Mrs. C. P. Crenshaw, and on which they were planning to build their home. The Crenshaws, because of their intense interest in locating a hospital in the county, agreed to relinquish their homesite for the location of the hospital. The block adjoining was then purchased from W. M. Duckworth, Jr. in order for the hospital site to include two city blocks.

Charles Carter, contractor from Baton Rouge, was awarded the contract for building the 25-bed facility and it was completed and ready for occupancy on July 1, 1951.

Dedication services and the formal opening were held on Sunday afternoon, July 1st, 1951, with Honorable J. P. Coleman, then Attorney General, and later Governor of Mississippi, as the speaker.

Announcement had been made that the hospital would be ready to receive patients immediately following the dedication and open house, and the first patient, Margie Ree Graves, was admitted only two hours later.

The first baby born was William Fredrick Bryant, son of Mr. and Mrs. Willis Bryant of Seminary. He was born on July 4th, 1951.

The first twins arrived just a year later on July 3rd, 1952. They are Carroll Lamar

and Roscoe Darrell Fairchild, sons of Mrs. Roscoe Fairchild and the late Mr. Fairchild of Collins.

Members of the Covington County Board of Supervisors at the time the hospital was constructed were Malcolm Napier — President, Sam Napier, Bill Heran, Lawrence Little, and Rozzie McQueen.

The original Board of Trustees were W. B. Todd — President, Bura Mitchell — Secretary, Estus Aultman, Colon McRaney and Walter Pickering.

The original Medical Staff was Dr. V. E. Landry — Resident and Chief Surgeon, Dr. A. S. Calhoun — Vice President, Dr. M. E. Hinman — Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. D. T. Allred, Dr. C. P. Crenshaw, Dr. E. D. French, and Dr. W. F. Stroud. Mrs. T. G. Shelton was Superintendent.

ANNEX PROJECT BEGINS

The institution had hardly begun operating until it became apparent that it must be enlarged to provide adequate hospital care, and the project of building an annex was initiated.

Plans for the addition were drawn by the same architects who drew the original plans. The plans included space for 25 additional beds, one nurses' station and a medicine room.

The Board of Supervisors ordered a bond issue unless protests were filed by

20% of the county's qualified electors. No protests were filed and the bonds were sold, this being in the sum of \$50,000.

Again the Federal and State Government provided the major share of the total cost of \$186,000 for the annex project. The county again only had to assume approximately 25% of the total cost as had been the case in the construction of the original plant.

W. S. Corley and Sons of Raleigh were awarded the contract for building the annex and it was ready for occupancy in late 1955.

Even though the hospital began as a 25-bed plant with provisions for 25 more beds, it was necessary to utilize some of the space for hospital services such as housekeeping, pharmacy, central supplies, etc.

Since then there have been renovations in 1972 increasing bed size of the hospital to 72 beds, and a multi-phase renovation program in the amount of \$2,265,000 began in 1976, which increased the hospital to its present 82 beds.

The latest renovation consisted of adding a two-story nursing wing while converting patient rooms in the older part of the hospital into rooms for added support services.

The latest renovation features rooms with modern, electronically controlled environment care units, private tile bath rooms, color television, and a couch that converts into a bed. Each room is individually heated and cooled and contains the latest lighting, oxygen and other medical accessory needs.

In addition to the patient rooms, a main entrance and lobby closer to the patient area, a physical therapy area, a respiratory

care and resuscitation unit, a pharmacy, patient supply area, a suite of offices for nursing administration, and a larger obstetrics and infant care area with a separate isolation area for infants with a contagious or infectious diagnosis to be treated apart from the other babies has been built.

The last multi-phase renovation program began in 1976 and used no tax money from the people of Covington County. The sum of \$1,710,000 was borrowed from the Federal Government at 5% for 30 years. \$500,000 in equipment was bought or leased, and another \$55,000 was spent out of the daily cash flow for various construction needs as they arose.

ACTIVE MEDICAL STAFF MEMBERS 1951-1985

Dr. V. E. Landry	Dr. J. E. Johnston
Dr. A. S. Calhoun	Dr. E. P. Reeves
Dr. D. T. Allred	Dr. W. E. Folse
Dr. W. F. Stroud	Dr. C. C. Tyler
Dr. D. P. Smith	Dr. Robert Jennings
Dr. John Kitchens	Dr. Richard Striffer
Dr. John Waggoner	Dr. Eddie Walker
Dr. M. E. Hinman	Dr. Robert Kilpatrick
Dr. E. D. French	Dr. Hernando Velez
Dr. C. P. Crenshaw	Dr. Word Johnston

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS 1951-1985

W. B. Todd	Bay P. Mitchell
Colon M. McRaney	M. L. Graham
Bura Mitchell	Jesse Walters
Estus Aultman	S. D. McGrew
G. Walter Pickering	D. A. Livingston
Frank Kelly	Sam F. Mooney
Lamont Coulter	Arthur Beasley
Allen Lott	H. A. Crawford

Troy Wade	C. Hamilton
Winston C. Speed	Ellis Graham
C. Leff Rutland	Roma Lee Crosby
I. W. Abercrombie	Clifton Keys
Bill Leonard	Jimmy Goff
Joe Crosby	Dwight Lyons
Willard Yawn	J. T. Speed
B. Pat Green	Bernard Campbell
Louis Ingram	

The following brief biographical sketches were written on the 34th anniversary of the hospital to demonstrate the quality and loyalty of its employees.

HELEN RUTH ALLEN

A hospital employee told Helen Ruth Allen about a vacant position at the hospital. She applied for the job on Friday and was called to work the following Monday.

Helen Ruth was born near the Kola Community in Covington County and has lived in the county all her life. She has two children, a daughter who has a BS degree working for the VA in Jackson and a son who is a sergeant in the Air Force planning a military career.

Starting work as a maid in the Housekeeping Department, Helen Ruth was transferred to Nursing as a nurse aide. Miss Grace Redmon, who was the nurse anesthetist, liked the work habits of Helen Ruth and wanted to train her as an Operating Room Technician.

Helen Ruth was eager to try the new job and willing to spend the time and energy necessary to learn the position. She states: "I have worked in that position for 30 years and I like it today as much as when I started. My work has become a major part of me."

DOT ASHLEY

Many career choices have been shaped by the example of a family member, close friend or neighbor. Such was the case for the daughter of Clyde and Catherine Lott Creel. Dot Ashley didn't know what she wanted to do after graduating from Seminary High School. Her mother suggested that she become a nurse like Grace Redmon, who was a close friend of the family and lived in the same community. Therefore, Dot went to Methodist Hospital in Hattiesburg and enrolled in their 3-year Diploma RN program from which she graduated about the time Covington County Hospital opened.

She interviewed for a RN position at the new hospital with Dr. C. P. Crenshaw, Mrs. Helen McNair and Mrs. Mary Francis Krebs. They wanted her to begin work that day. She has worked as a general duty RN, a supervisor, head nurse and as Director of Nursing.



The Covington County Hospital opened on July 1, 1951 with a 25 bed capacity. The facility currently has an ultra-modern plant capable of serving 83 patients. In addition, the hospital has outpatient surgery, home health and nuclear medical evaluation. (Photo by Jimmy Goff)

Dot states that she has never had a desire to change jobs or to move because she likes the people of this county and the doctors with whom she works. She enjoys working with her fellow employees in serving the health care needs of the community.

DR. JOE JOHNSTON

A graduate of Oxford High School, Dr. Joe Johnston never attended Mississippi College where an enrollment spot had been secured for him nor did he study chemical engineering as he had thought he would during high school. His career choices were changed on the advice of an uncle who told him that if he went into medicine, he could be his own boss, but that as a chemical engineer, he would be the employee of someone else.

Therefore, Dr. Johnston enrolled in the University of Mississippi for his pre-medical education. His medical education was completed at Cornell University in New York where he prepared for General Practice now known as Family Practice.

A family friend, Dr. Ricks, who was the Director of the Mississippi State Board of Health, told Dr. Johnston that Mount Olive was in need of a doctor because Dr. Stroud was old, Dr. Calhoun had had a heart attack and that Dr. Folse had relocated his practice to Collins. With that recommendation, Dr. Johnston moved to Mount Olive for his only career move.

When asked why he had remained in Mount Olive to practice medicine, he replied, "Mount Olive has been good to me and good to my family." To the citizens of the area that statement can be changed to "Dr. Johnston has been good for us and our community."

Dr. Johnston is proud to have his son, Dr. Word Johnston, in practice with him and hopes that the professional association he has enjoyed in Mount Olive will carry on for Dr. Word Johnston's practice.

Dr. Johnston stated that after delivering over 2,500 babies in his life, he is glad for Dr. Word Johnston to pick up that practice. When asked to recount some obstetrical experiences, Dr. Johnston mentioned that he had delivered one baby by candlelight, one by lantern, one by light from the fireplace, one in his office bathroom, several in the back seat of two door cars and one on his carport.

W. G. "BILL" LEONARD

Bill Leonard, President of Mount Olive Bank, is also President of the Board of Trustees for Covington County Hospital.

Born and reared within the city limits of Mount Olive, Mr. Leonard has served as President of Mount Olive Bank since 1977 after serving five years as Vice-President of the bank.

Originally appointed by Mr. L. L. Little to the hospital's Board of Trustees to fill

the unfulfilled term of Leff Rutland, Mr. Leonard has served on the hospital board since February of 1964.

Mr. Leonard is proud of his volunteer service and leadership on behalf of the county through the hospital because he has seen much improvement in the hospital's operation through expanded services, building programs and improved professional staff.

MARTHA SUE McDONALD

If you were born at Covington County Hospital or if you delivered there, it is a good possibility that Martha Sue McDonald was involved in the process. One of her rewards is seeing and knowing people she has helped in the delivery process during her thirty plus years at the hospital.

Martha Sue was born in Covington County and has lived her entire life here except for two years. Those two years were spent in Chicago where she graduated from McKinley High School.

Martha Sue began her work at the hospital as a nurse aide and enjoyed nursing because of the many small things she could do to assist the patients. Her career in nursing became more specialized because of the encouragement of Dr. Crenshaw and Dr. Hinnman.

She completed 120 and 140 hour nursing courses taught at the hospital and after 5 years employment, became an LPN.

After her education and training she has continued to be employed in the Emergency Services Department of the hospital and is still involved with delivering babies.

Nine of her ten children live in Covington County.

FLORESTINE SPENCER

Florestine Spencer began working at Covington County Hospital in 1960 and never returned to college to complete the last 18 hours toward a BS degree in Home Economics.

Born to Jodie and Corean Sullivan in the Hopewell Community of Covington County, Florestine graduated from Hopewell High School and then completed 3½ years college at Jackson State University.

She began employment at the hospital as a tray person and quickly advanced to the position of assistant cook from which she advanced to head cook.

The position of Head Cook tied directly to her interest in home economics and gave her the responsibility and accountability for management that she enjoys therefore, she never left to complete her degree.

ED WALKER

Ed grew up in the Rock Hill Community of Covington County and graduated from Mount Olive High School. After graduation, he started to Jones County Junior

College studying chemistry, but was drafted by the Army. He served with the Army in Germany. After completing his military duty he went back to JCJC and began his study in Electronics. He soon changed his major to Medical Technology and after graduation completed a two year internship in Vicksburg in preparation for a Medical Technologist career.

His first and only job after graduation has been at Covington County Hospital. He originally came to the hospital as Director of Laboratory, X-Ray and EKG's. As the hospital grew other qualified personnel were employed to direct radiology and EKG's. Ed's duties have not been reduced because there has been a major expansion in the capabilities and technology within the Laboratory.

Ed and Carolyn live in the Salem Community with their sons where Ed is a part time cattle farmer. He has worked at the hospital over 25 years.

The hospital is continuing to adapt and expand its services to meet present demands and trends. The hospital now provides outpatient surgery, a hospital-based home health service and a wellness program. Plans for the future include the implementation of a hospice program, swing-bed, adult day care and skilled nursing programs. The present administrator is Irving Hitt.

RESOURCES

June Wade, Irving Hitt, and an article in *The News Commercial*, June 1981.



Dr. C. P. Crenshaw (shown) was one of the guiding forces behind the organization of the Covington County Hospital in 1951. He was one of the original members of the medical staff.

NEWSPAPERS IN COVINGTON COUNTY

During the 166 year history of Covington County there have been eleven newspapers published. The information regarding the history of these papers was obtained from *Mississippi Newspapers 1805-1940* prepared by Works Projects Administration (WPA) researchers for the Historical Records Survey, July 1942.

WILLIAMSBURG

Covington County Journal, 1889-1896. Weekly each Friday.

D. A. McIntosh, editor by May 6, 1892; C. A. Robertson, editor by January 6, 1893; J. R. Stewart, publisher by January 6, 1893; D. A. McIntosh, proprietor by September 7, 1893; Lawrence Burt, editor and publisher by March 30, 1894.

Watchman Journal, 1891-January 26, 1901. Weekly each Friday.

James Walker, establisher, then known as *Watchman*; Dovie Walker, editor, by July 15, 1892; James M. Walker, editor and publisher, by February 17, 1893; J. F. M. Huddleston, editor, by March 30, 1894; James M. Walker, publisher, by March 30, 1894; J. M. Walker, editor and publisher, by February 8, 1895; J. M. Walker, editor and publisher, by March 30, 1900 with the name changed to *Watchman Journal*.

Republican Star, 1897-January 26, 1901. Weekly.

J. R. Stewart, editor by January 10, 1900. The day of publication was Thursday in 1899, Wednesday by January 10, 1900 and Saturday by January 12, 1901.

Williamsburg Herald, 1903-April 1905. Weekly each Friday.

J. T. Tannehill, establisher, editor and publisher the entire life of the newspaper. The paper was absorbed by the *Collins Commercial* in April 1905.

SEMINARY

Seminary Breeze, 1901-1906. Weekly.

J. M. (Jimmie) Walker, establisher, editor and publisher for the entire life of the newspaper.

COLLINS

Covington County News, 1905-February 12, 1937. Weekly.

J. M. Walker, editor by April 21, 1906; James D. Arrington, editor by July 1, 1931. This paper and the *Collins Commercial* consolidated February 12, 1937 to form the *News Commercial*. Appeared on Saturday after April 21, 1906, was appearing on Wednesday by July 1, 1931.

Collins Commercial, 1902-February 12, 1937. Weekly.

W. U. Corley, editor and manager by



James (Jimmy) Arrington was a well known "after-dinner" speaker, columnist, editor of The News Commercial, and mayor of Collins from the 1930s through the 1950s. Arrington spoke in all the counties in Mississippi and in almost all of the United States. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. James Arrington)

February 15, 1906. This paper absorbed the *Williamsburg Herald* in April 1905. E. W. Taylor, editor by April 19, 1906; B. H. Robertson, editor by May 7, 1909; W. M. Campbell, editor by August 20, 1909; E. L. Dent, publisher by August 20, 1909; Roy G. Logan, editor by January 14, 1910; W. H. Carruth, publisher by January 28, 1910; W. H. Carruth, editor and proprietor by March 4, 1910; W. V. Watkins, editor and proprietor by April 4, 1912; R. H. Watkins, editor and proprietor, by May 3, 1917. This paper consolidated with the *Covington County News* on February 12, 1937 to form *The News Commercial*.

The News Commercial, February 12, 1937-.

James D. Arrington, editor and publisher, by February 12, 1937; H. D. Gillis, publisher, by February 12, 1937; Mrs. James D. Arrington, editor and publisher, by December 1957.

MOUNT OLIVE

Mount Olive Tribune, 1937-.

R. H. Watkins, editor and establisher in 1937; Mrs. R. H. Watkins, editor and publisher after her husband's death in the 1950s; Mrs. James D. Arrington, editor and publisher by 1960.

JAMES D. ARRINGTON

One of the most reknown newspapermen in the history of Covington County has been James D. Arrington. Mr. Arrington came to Collins in May 1931, and worked with the *Covington County News*. When the *Covington County News* and the *Collins Commercial* consolidated in February 1937 Mr. Arrington coined the paper's name, *The News Commercial*.

As editor of the paper until his death December 25, 1957 and as mayor of Collins for seventeen years this popular writer and "after dinner" speaker traveled all over the nation and literally "put Collins on the map."

The following article is reprinted by permission of Bob Pittman, who was a writer at the *State Times* during the time that Mr. Arrington wrote a column for the Jackson-based *State Times*.

In a telephone conversation on July 29, 1985, Mr. Pittman stated that "he was delighted to have this story about his good friend, Jimmy Arrington, reprinted."

"For Jimmy Arrington"

Reprinted from the *State Times*, Sunday, August 11, 1957. Written by Bob Pittman, *State Times* Staff Writer.

The *State Times* receives a telephone call each morning at 8:30.

It may be from anywhere from New York to San Francisco.

Usually, it's from Collins.

The call, which has been coming for the past year, is a daily "Report From Collins," prepared by the city's 49-year-old mayor, editor, and humorist, James Duncan Arrington.

Jimmy Arrington, who began his column in the *State Times* at the National Democratic Convention August 7, 1956, thought then "my column would end when the convention closed."

The column, however, had become so popular that *State Times* readers asked him to continue.

"FIRST LOVE"

Of his careers as mayor, editor, and speaker, Arrington says his weekly paper, *The Collins News-Commercial*, is his "first love."

A native of Hattiesburg, the balding editor left his job as a Florida banker to inaugurate the Collins weekly in 1931. His only press experience, before that time, had been with the *Student Printz* at Mississippi Southern College, then State Teachers College.

"Then," he laughed, "I conducted a crusade for more liberal regulations for students and the president told me he

thought it would be best if I didn't come back."

Arrington transferred to Millsaps College in Jackson, where he completed his junior year. Later he returned to the capital city and passed the bar examination after studying three years at Jackson School of Law.

UNFORGETTABLE

Two of his papers, he says, he'll never forget. One was an "April Fool" edition.

"It was while Truman was president," he remembered. "We ran off a few papers beforehand with the headline saying 'Truman Resigns.' I mailed one to Congressman John Bell Williams. He told me he walked down a capitol corridor with the headline showing and almost caused a panic."

The other involved the picture of a man.

"We ordered an engraving made of this man," he said, "and got it back larger than we had ordered. It was too long for page one, so we just cut him off at the knees and continued his feet on the back page."

Former president of the Mississippi Press Association, the nationally-known Arrington said he got his start as a speaker at a Rotary Club district conference in 1938.

Held May 13, 1938 in Hattiesburg, the conference included Rotarians from Louisiana and Mississippi.

Following the address, the Hattiesburg paper reported "Arrington's address won the heartiest laughter and loudest applause accorded any speaker on the entire three-day program. And that included Gov. Hugh White and Oliver Emmerich."

MORE SPEECHES

A week later, he spoke to the Magnolia Rotary Club and then appeared on the program of the Neshoba County Fair.

"Before that speech," he said, "I took my wife to the Baptist Hospital in Jackson, went to Philadelphia to make the speech, then came to Collins. When I got back, I found I had my second daughter. Since then I've always been anxious when I speak in Neshoba county. I hurry home to see how many children I have."

His first out-of-state speaking engagement was before the Memphis Traffic Club in October, 1938. Shortly afterwards, he told the Delta Ice Manufacturers Association, at a convention in New Orleans, "Ice is the only thing in the nation that is really what it's cracked up to be."

From there his fame as an after dinner speaker skyrocketed.

AT 2,500 MEETS

Since 1938, he estimates, he's appeared at upwards of 2500 conventions and meetings.

"I'm getting older now," he confessed, "and I'm slowing down some."

He averaged about two speeches per week before the "slow down."

Calling himself the "most successful lawyer in Mississippi because I've never lost a case" — he's never had one — Arrington has spoken in every county in the state and in every state except Rhode Island, Maine, and Vermont.

"In 1949," he declared, "I was on a train 26 nights in May."

In January, 1947, he appeared as a speaker on a program with John Foster Dulles, then UN representative, and Averill Harriman, secretary of commerce, at a Magazine Industry Conference."

FAITHFUL SUITCASE

"I choose my engagements according to travel accommodations now," he explained. "In 1941 I bought an aluminum suitcase. This fall I will have logged one million miles on it."

"Travel is no problem now" he feels, "but the first question I ask is about plane connections. If I can't go by plane, I don't go."

Several times, he reports, he has left Jackson in the morning, spoken at San Francisco at night, and been back in Jackson the next day.

"When I go now," he said, "I go by air, stay at the hotel in which I'm speaking, and catch the first plane out after the speech. And I don't charge for speaking, I charge for having to travel."

The slimly built Arrington pointed out that he has no agent but receives each request personally. He fills as many speaking dates as possible, as long as they don't interfere with his work on the paper.

The editor-mayor began reporting Democratic conventions in 1944 with a column carried by several Mississippi papers.

In 1956, however, his "Report From Collins," which featured the humorous side of the convention, was published only by the State Times.

"Now," he remarked, "practically every mail brings something about the column. Some of it is complimentary. Some is far from it."

After one column he received a copy of the *Proletarian News*, a Communist paper published in Chicago. It had been mailed in Magnolia, Miss.

He receives mail, also, from *State Times* readers in Texas and "some guy who travels on Delta Air Lines."

"Everytime he comes through Jackson," Arrington said, "I get a letter from him. He tells me he buys a *State Times* to read my column every time he's there. I have no idea who he is or where he's from."

Arrington writes his column every morning whether, he's in Collins, California, or New York.

That way, he believes, he can write about fresh news.

FIRST BIG SPEECH

"But my first 'big time' speech," the mayor of 19 years recalled, "was before the National Industrial Council at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York."

"A Mr. Longino of Monticello was on the program committee," he said, "and he invited me. I was reluctant about going, but he said he would take the blame."

"I don't know who was more nervous," Arrington thought back. "Mr. Longino or me."

The humorist said a plump member of the Catholic clergy sat next to him at the banquet meeting.

"After I was presented," he continued, "I stumbled along, then noticed the father's stomach. When I told my first story his stomach moved a little, than a little more when I told the second. After I told the third he burst into a big belly laugh. After that I kept one eye on the stomach and as long as it moved I knew I was all right."

STAGE FRIGHT?

Arrington, who was the first speaker in that room ever to be called back for an encore, said he lost his stage fright at that meeting and has never been bothered since.

The Collins mayor never speaks about controversial issues, he said, unless he does so in a humorous way.

Also, he emphasized, "I try to localize each speech. The audience is usually surprised to find that I know something of their problems." He "localizes" his addresses, he explained, by arriving at each meeting beforehand and studying local papers and organizational material.

As for controversial issues, he said, "I think if I can get them to open their mouths by laughing I think I can cram down them whatever, I want."

NEVER WRITES SPEECHES

Unsuccessful candidate for the state legislature in 1939 and for lieutenant governor in 1951, Arrington declared he never writes a speech, and he doesn't speak from notes.

"That's why I don't like to speak to the same group twice," he laughed. "I can't ever remember what stories I told before. Anyway, it's a lot easier to change crowds than it is to change speeches."

The popular speaker gets more requests from northern and eastern groups than he does from southern groups, and he gets more response to speeches out of the state.

"Why when I speak in California, every crackpot in the state writes me," he declared.

In all his appearances, he said, he has spoken only twice to integrated audiences.

"Then," he observed, "Negroes were placed off to themselves. When you see things like that you have a good indication there's a lot of hypocrisy somewhere."

"When I'm at home," he began, "I get up at 6 o'clock. I read the morning papers, then listen to the early news. At 7:30 I go to the office and write the column. Then I come home and eat breakfast, read the column again, go back to the office and call the *State Times*."

The nearest I came to missing a day," he recalled, "was a few weeks ago when an electrical storm had closed all lines from Collins to Jackson. I drove to Seminary,

nine miles away, to call in."

Father of three children, Arrington said he thinks his column is the only one in the nation written the day it appears, "so it won't be behind the news."

Mayor of a city of 1293 population, Arrington this week began his second year with his daily "Report from Collins."

"I'll keep reporting as long as they'll take my calls," he said.

RESOURCES

Mississippi Newspapers 1805-1940 written by the Works Projects Administration (WPA), 1942; Mrs. James D. Arrington; and the *State Times*, Sunday, August 11, 1957, "For Jimmy Arrington," by Bob Pittman.

THE NEWS-COMMERCIAL

A Consolidation of The Covington County News and The Collins Commercial

Collins, Mississippi, Friday, April 1, 1949

Devoted to the Best Interests of Covington County

NO. 30

HARRY TRUMAN RESIGNS

Random Remarks By Ye Editor Congratulations to our governor on appointing Senator James O. Eastland as a full member of his staff. The school in Jackson last week was a week at the new "Free Memorial Football Stadium" which has just been completed. The field is as big as the hole in the city of Jackson.	Local Fire Dept. Issues New Rule The local fire department today requested all owners of property that should catch fire to notify the department as soon as possible after the fire is discovered, as to whether insurance is carried on the property. During the past several months the department has been embarrassed by extinguishing fires on property that was insured. (Continued on back page)	Man Near Death; No Liquor Found The condition of Alonzo Seary remains critical while a state-wide search is being conducted for at least 2 ounces of whiskey which doctors say he must have if he is to survive a strange malady with which he was stricken last week. Appeals over the radio and through the press for just a small amount of whiskey has been in vain. Older citizens here state that they can remember when liquor was present in the county but that for the past 20 years they have not heard of a single drop being sold.	Applications Needed For Post Office Job Congressman Bill Colmer issued an urgent plea to citizens of Covington County to apply for positions as rural mail carriers. Mr. Colmer stated that there were 7 rural routes open in the county and after two months of notice, not a single person had applied for the job. In his statement Mr. Colmer pointed out that unless there were volunteers for the jobs that the routes would have to be discontinued. (Continued on back page)	Will Open Haberdashery in Missouri; John L. Lewis Slated To Be Appointed Harry S. Truman resigned as president of the United States at 12:01 A. M. today. His decision to retire from office came after a long season with personal and political friends, among whom were Congressman John Rankin, Senator Jim Eastland, Governor Fielding Wright of Mississippi and Governor Strom Thurman of South Carolina. Governors Wright and Thurman flew to Washington to beg Mr. Truman not to resign but the president turned a deaf ear to their pleas.
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Garbage Pick-up Schedule Given
 The municipal garbage disposal commission stated today that a new pick-up schedule for trash and garbage had been arranged as follows:
 The business section of town on the 17th of September and the 3rd of February each year.
 Residential section on the 1st of September and the 1st of February.

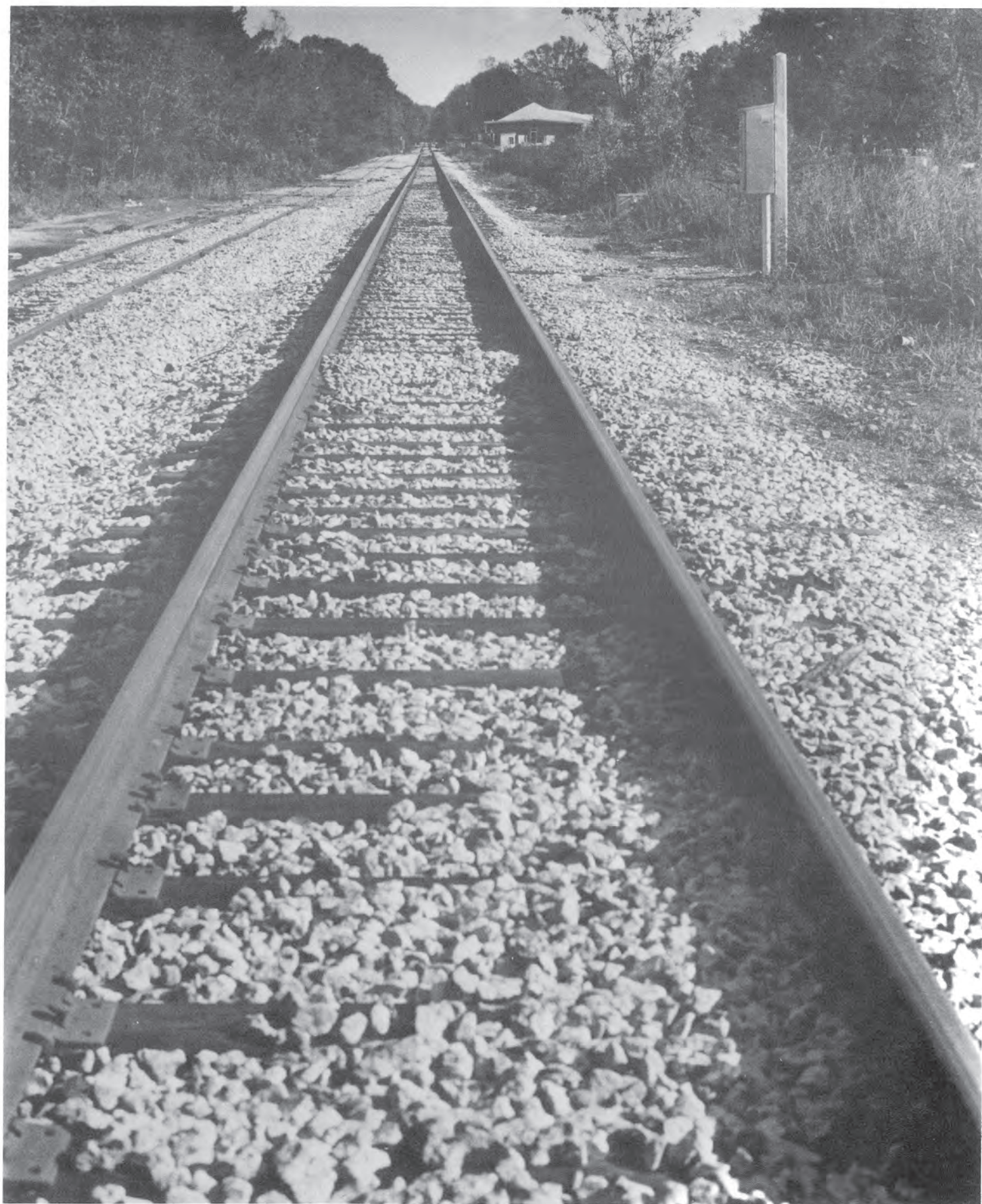
THE NEWS-COMMERCIAL, COLLINS, MISSISSIPPI, Friday, April 1, 1949

(Continued From Front Page) (Continued From Front Page) (Continued From Front Page) (Continued From Front Page) (Continued From Front Page) (Continued From Front Page)

APRIL FOOL!

THE NEWS-COMMERCIAL PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY Entered at the post office at Collins, Mississippi, as second-class mail matter under act of congress, March 3, 1879. AMOS D. ARRINGTON, Owner and Editor. Stewart McRaney, student at St. Johns College, Annapolis, Md., arrived Tuesday to spend the spring holidays with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. B. McRaney. Miss Ethel Lide of Bay Minette, Ala., was a visitor in the home of her sister, Mrs. E. H. Jones. Miss Lide, accompanied by Mesdames H. Jones, D. L. O. Speed and A. C. Jones, Jr., and Miss Mary Nell Lott, visited the Hatcher Pilgrimage on Friday. Mr. and Mrs. Winston McLaurin	Seminary News Mr. and Mrs. Earl Speed of Prattville spent Sunday with the latter's mother, Mrs. Scott Lott. Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Harris of Hattiesburg visited their cousins, Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Williams Sunday. Mr. and Mrs. George S. Hemery visited Mr. and Mrs. Archie Jordan in Ellenville over the week-end. Miss Mildred Lee Hemery of Hattiesburg and Kenneth Davis of Jackson spent Sunday with the Jordans. Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Watts of Dallas, Texas and Misses Lottie Minter, Edna Mae and Frances Bass of Hattiesburg spent the week-end with the Misses Bass' parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Guess of Camden, N. J., are receiving congratulations on the arrival of a five pound daughter, whom they have named Brenda Elmer. She is welcomed by her brother, Randy. Mrs. Guess will be remembered as	Mount Olive News Mr. and Mrs. Benny Moore of Mississippi College spent the week-end with homefolks. Mrs. Beulah Harrell spent the week-end in Mize, in the home of her daughter, Mrs. Randall Craft. Mr. and Mrs. Olney Hemby and small daughter of Greenville, Ohio, are spending a few weeks in the home of his mother, Mrs. Nannie Hemby. Mr. and Mrs. George Guess of Camden, N. J., are receiving congratulations on the arrival of a five pound daughter, whom they have named Brenda Elmer. She is welcomed by her brother, Randy. Mrs. Guess will be remembered as	LOCAL HEALTH NEWS Quite often the question is asked about proper disposal of sewage. Just what is meant by proper disposal of sewage? In discussing this topic, we may say that to begin with the proper disposal of sewage means placing same to where that it will not harm the human being. Now there may be several methods used to accomplish this task. First, one of the first practices used was to bury human refuse. We find that in Biblical days the soldiers were commanded to dig holes in the ground and then cover the human refuse. Evidently back there in those days the people knew that mankind gave off deadly germs and that it was necessary to pay	CLUB MEETS The Cold Springs club met March 16, in the room of the Jones ca Stanley Jones as host. The meeting was called by the president and a general garden of given by Mrs. Stanley. The secretary, Mrs. called the roll with answering with a ho hint. Mrs. Alex Abercromb interesting talk on a general garden of given by Mrs. Stanley. Miss Elsie Thomas. The educational College was given by Cagle. A demonstration on and care of silver, etc.
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These two headlines are examples of the humor of "The New Commercial" editor, James (Jimmy) Arrington. Both headlines caused quite a bit of consternation.



Appendix

COLLINS BUSINESSES 1984

THE OLDEST BUSINESSES IN COLLINS

The News Commercial	1901
Pope Company, Inc.	1913
Upton Department Store	1924
Rogers and Speed	1926
Johns Funeral Home	1928
Production Credit Assoc.	1934
State Bank and Trust Co.	1934
W. W. Dent, Atty.	1934
Clayton Drug Store	1938

BUSINESSES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Allred, Dewitt, T., Jr., Atty.	1972
Allred, William W., Atty.	1958
Bargain Box	1975
Bill's Buy and Sell	1977
Bill's Dollar Store	1967
Bishop, James, DDS	1975
Blackwell, John P., Acct.	1964
Blackwell Insurance Agency	1984
Bouquet Shop	1982
Buffington Ford Co.	1962
Buffington Ford Tractor	1970
Buffington Oil Co.	1964
Buffington, Larry, Atty.	1981
Byrd's Independents	1981
C & C Drugs	1948
C & O Auto Parts	1968
Calhoun Co. Inc.	1958
Canfield's Market	1971
Chain, Fledell, Atty.	1975
Chevron USA, Inc.	1947
Chic-N-Box	1964
Chief's Welding Service	1976
Chuck's Chic-N-Burger	1969
City Rental and Sales	1984
Clayton Drug Store	1938
Collins Auto and Appliance	1984
Collins Auto Supply	1966
Collins Butane	1978
Collins Municipal Library	1958
Collins Cooperative	1965
Collins Florist	1948
Collins Greenhouses	1967
Collins Laundry & Cleaners	1947
Collins Pipeline Co.	1970
Colonial Pipeline	1963
Corner Carousel	1979
Country Kitchen	1979
Covington Auto Parts	1978
Covington County Animal Hospital	1977
Covington County Bank	1975
Covington County Hospital	1951
Covington Steel Co.	1978
Craft-Rogers Chevrolet	1982

Crawford, Ken, Atty.	1980
Crenshaw, C. P., MD.	1946
Cuttin' Loose Hair Styles	1979
D & L Timber	1977
Deb's Hair Factory	1981
Dent, W. W., Atty.	1934
Dixieland Finance	1978
Donna's Shoetique	1980
Doris Beauty Shop	1976
Ellis & Son Welding	1963
Fairchild Jewelers	1983
Faler's Children's Wear	1969
Fantasy Fabrics	1972
Farm Bureau	1955
Fashion Nook	1968
Feeders Milling Co.	1963
First Guaranty Saving and Loan	1965
First Magnolia Federal Savings & Loan	1972
Folse, W. E., MD.	1955
Fontaine Truck Equipment	1965
Four Seasons	1971
Four Star Meat Co.	1984
Gulf Oil Corp.	1947
Highlander Center	1965
Hudson 66 Service Station	1960
J & R Market	1974
James Cleaners	1949
Jennings	1983
Johns Funeral Home	1928
Jones Motel	1958
Jordan's Chevron	1977
Jr. Food Mart	1979
Kate's Flowers	1981
Keyes, John K., Atty.	1948
Keys, Charles, CPA.	1970
King Lumber & Materials	1970
Kut and Kurl Salon	1977
Linda's Fashion Salon	1971
Louise's Beauty Salon	1950
M and M Child Care	1979
Main Street Barber Shop	1959
Mauldin's Auto Sales	1960
McIntosh, Dan A., III, Atty.	1965
McQueen, Charles, Inc.	1983
McQueen Contracting	1972
Merle Norman Cosmetics	1979
Metropolitan Insurance	1982
Miller Transporters	1948
Mooney, Arnold, Ins.	1973
Mooney Real Estate	1972
Mooney's Furniture	1964
Mt. Olive Bank	1971
NAPA	1978
New Life and Creations	1982
Oaks Gifts and Antiques	1978
OTASCO Associate Store	1975
Pat's Auto Parts	1974
Paul's Auto Service	1977
Penny Pincher	1984
Pickering Clothing Store	1969

Pickering, Kelton, Atty.	1979
Pickering TV & Appliance Rental.	1982
Pickering True Value & Bldg. Mat.	1976
Piggly Wiggly	1966
Pine Belt Ready-Mix Concrete	1971
Pipkin's Electric	1953
Plantation Pipe Line	1941
Pope Co. Inc.	1913
Production Credit Assn.	1934
R & R Welding Service	1981
Rachel's Beauty Shop	1961
Rag Barn	1976
Reeves, E. P., MD.	1957
Riverside Trading Post	1984
Rogers, Harlan B., DDS.	1959
Rogers & Speed	1926
Rogers, Tommy Bott, Atty.	1966
Rutland Lumber Co.	1955
Sammy's Pit Barbecue	1981
Sanderson Farms, Inc.	1962
Sassy Fashions	1982
Sears	1968
Service Finance	1972
Shell Oil	1967
Shoemake, Bob Oil & Gas	1930
Shoemake, David, Atty.	1974
Shoemake Sporting Goods	1979
Sonic Drive Inn	1978
Southern Florist	1975
Southern Steel and Erection	1983
Speck's Restaurant	1960
State Bank & Trust, Co.	1934
State Farm Insurance	1962
Stevens Sportswear	1971
Stevens and Thomas	1973
Sullivan, George T., Atty.	1980
Sullivan Motors, Inc.	1978
Sutton Heating and Air Cond.	1967
T and M Terminal	1970
TWL Variety Store	1950
The News-Commercial	1901
Tyler, Charles, MD.	1957
Union Oil Co.	1948
Upton Dept. Store	1924
Value Mart Stores	1980
Venia Park Funeral Home	1979
Vic's Body Shop	1975
WKNZ Radio	1978
Waters Trucking	1964
Ward's	1984
White's Discount Drugs	1971
White's Electronics	1973
Wolverton, Ottis, Surveyor	1969
Woodland Hills Nursing Home	1971
Wyatt's Discount Tire Service	1978

POST OFFICES IN COVINGTON COUNTY IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER 1826-1985 WITH OPENING AND CLOSING YEARS

Jaynesville	1826-1876	Ora	1890-1922	Tax	1900-1902
Mount Carmel	1826-1906	Moscoss	1891-1907	Carson	1900-1906
Williamsburg	1831-1907	Lowland	1892-1898	Gramby	1900-1901
Orangeburgh	1832-1833	Thames	1893-1906	Dry Creek	1902-1908
Ocoha Bridge	1832-1844	Powell	1894-1907	Jona	1901-1905
Oaktomie	1832-1835	Sanford	1894-1959	Pickering	1901-1907(?)
Santee	1843-1906	Dont	1894-1907	Gilmer	1901-1907
Dry Creek	1844-1867	Bassfield	1895-1906	Tobe	1901-1901
Oakohay	1850-1906	Mish	1895-1909	Leddrow (Leddrew)	1901-1905
Pinnellville	1850-1852	Seminary	1895-	Norfleet	1902-1906
Wilkesburg	1850-1904	Lux	1896-1924	Mattie	1902-1905
Zion Seminary	1857-1876	Clem	1898-1906	Sitka	1903-1907
Mount Olive	1858-	Cape	1898-1902	Angie	1903-1904
Station Creek	1869-1886	Aster	1899-1907	Leeke	1903-1905
Reddoch	1876-1902	Kola	1899-1922	Melba	1903-1904
Curvy Creek (Curry?)	1879-1882	Collins	1899-	Extra	1904-1905
Richmond	1879-1905	Katie	1900-1905	Gandsi	1905-1910
Wheelerville	1881-1886	Zawn	1900-1900	Arbo	1905-1919
Deen	1882-1906	Speed	1900-1915	Vex	1905-1907
Flynt	1885-1887	Yawn	1900-1906	Caraway	1905-1905
Welch	1886-1900	Flynt	1900-1905		

(List taken from "The Post Office History of Covington County," by Broox Sledge).

125 SCHOOLS IN COVINGTON COUNTY FROM 1904-1985

Arbo	Flynt	Look Out	Point Pleasant
Baker	Friendship	Lott	Powell
Bass	Gandsi	Lowery	Price
Bassfield	Gilmore	Lowland	Providence
Bay Springs	Good Hope	Lux	Reddoch
Beaver Creek	Graham	Matchett Branch	Riels Line
Bellview	Gray	Mathis	Rock Hill
Belmont	Greens Creek	Mayfield	Rocky Valley
Bethel Line	Grove Line	McInnis	Rogers Creek
Black Jack		McLaurin	
Blakely	Hall Pond	Midway	Salem
Blue Springs	Harper	Mish	Sanford
Byrd	Hathorn	Mission	Santee
	High Hill	Moscoss	Seminary
Calhoun	Holiday Creek	Mt. Carmel	Shady Oak
Caney Head	Hopewell	Mt. Horeb	Shelby Creek
Carson		Mt. Olive	Shiloh
Carver	Jones Chapel	Mt. Tabor	Smith
Cedar Grove	Jaynesville		Speed
Center Point	Jerusalem	New Hope Line	Spring Field Line
Center Ridge	Johnson	New Hopewell	Spring Hill
Centerville	Kelly Creek	New Prospects	Station Creek
Chapel	King	Oakahay	Sumrall
Clark	Knight	Oak/Bowery	Sweet Home
Cleveland	Kola	Oak Grove Line	Sweet Water
Cold Springs		Oak Ridge	
Collins	Lacony	Oakvalle	Union
Concord	Leaf River	Ora	Walls
Cooley Springs	Lillie Rose	Pickering	Walton
	Lincoln	Pine Grove	Watts
Dry Creek	Linwood	Pine Hearst	White House
Dry Ridge	Lone Star	Pine Hill Line	Williamsburg
Eminence	Long Bridge	Pineville	Willow Grove
Enterprise			

SUPERINTENDENTS OF EDUCATION FOR THE COVINGTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

E. W. Larkin	1875-1900*
Dr. Gilbert	1878-1880*
A. H. Hall	1880-1884
J. N. Walker	1884-1888
Dr. T. A. Gibson	1888-1890
N. B. Holcomb	1890-1894
W. L. Williamson	1896-1900
Tom R. Thames	1900-1908
J. T. Calhoun	1908-1915
Bura Hilburn	1915-1917
W. L. Williams	1917 (served four months)
Alex Newton	1917-1928
O. J. Cole	1928-1932
Edd Thames	1932-1936
George Newton	1936-1940
Frank Lott	1940-1945
Troy Lane	1945-1949
Ellis Flynt	1949-1960
Denson Lott	1960-1967
Quinton S. Napier	1967-1983
Ronny Graves	1983-

*No explanation is given for the overlapping dates.

Prepared from a booklet printed for the use of the Board of Trustees of the county school system in 1971. Used courtesy of Wilton Rogers.

Prepared from the files of the Board of Education, and the WPA writings of Mrs. Nathan Rogers and Mrs. Jewel Boyd.

A LISTING OF COVINGTON COUNTY CEMETERIES

Alex Sanford Cemetery
Atwood Cemetery
Aultman Cemetery
Aultman, Vernie, Cemetery
Barnes Cemetery
Bethany Cemetery
Bethel Baptist Cemetery
Bethel Methodist Cemetery
Biglane Cemetery
Black Jack or Kaintuck Cemetery
Blakley Cemetery
Broom Cemetery
Bryant Cemetery
Bryant, New Jessie, Cemetery
Bryant, Old Jessie, Cemetery
Bryant Cemetery
Bullock Cemetery
Bullock, Italian, Cemetery
Bullock Cemetery
Byrd Cemetery
Calhoun Cemetery
Chambers Cemetery
Chapel Cemetery
Clark Cemetery
Clark & Stuckey Cemetery
Cold Springs Cemetery
Collins Cemetery
Cooley Springs Cemetery
Coulter, Baird, Cemetery
County Line Cemetery
Crosby Cemetery
Davis Cemetery
Dossett Cemetery
Easterling Cemetery
Eminence Baptist Cemetery
Eminence Methodist Cemetery
Evergreen Cemetery
Faithway Cemetery
Garner Cemetery

Gates Cemetery
Geiger Cemetery
Geiger Cemetery
Graham Cemetery
Graves Cemetery
Graves Cemetery
Hatten Cemetery
Hemeter Cemetery
Holy Temple Cemetery
Ingraham Cemetery
Kelly Cemetery
Kelly Cemetery
Knight—Champ Cemetery
Leaf River Cemetery
Lebanon Cemetery
Lee & Clark Cemetery
Liberty Cemetery
Lone Star Cemetery
Lott, W. G. Cemetery
Lowry Cemetery
Lowry Cemetery
Magee Cemetery
Magee Cemetery
Magee Cemetery
McDonald Cemetery
McNair Cemetery
McNair, First Old, Cemetery
Miller—Coulter Cemetery
McRae Cemetery
Milloy Cemetery
Moore Cemetery
Moore Cemetery
Moscos Cemetery
Mt. Horeb Cemetery
Mount Olive Cemetery
New Hope Cemetery
Oakdale United Methodist
Oakvale Methodist Cemetery
Okahay—McLeod Cemetery

Ora Cemetery
Patton Cemetery
Pleasant Hill Baptist Cemetery
Powell Cemetery
Pope Cemetery
Redmon Cemetery
Robertson, Norvell, Cemetery
Robertson, William Cary Cemetery
Robertson Cemetery
Rock Hill Baptist Cemetery
Rock Hill Cemetery
Rogers, Meshack, Cemetery
Rogers, Norvel, Cemetery
Rutland Cemetery
Salem Cemetery
Seminary Cemetery
Seminary at River Cemetery
Shiloh Cemetery
Short Cemetery
Smyrna Cemetery
Speed Cemetery
Speed Cemetery
Station Creek Cemetery
Taylor Cemetery
Terrell Cemetery
Unknown Cemetery
Union, Junior, Cemetery (South)
Union, Senior, Cemetery (North)
Watts Family Cemetery
Watts, George, Cemetery
Watts, Presley, Cemetery
Welch Cemetery
Williamsburg Baptist Cemetery
Williamsburg Catholic & Methodist
Williamsburg, Old or General
Williamson Cemetery
Willow Grove Cemetery
Young Cemetery

INCOMPLETE LISTING OF CEMETERIES IN THE AREA SURROUNDING COVINGTON COUNTY

Baptist Cemetery	McDonald, Lost, Cemetery
Barwick Cemetery	McInnis, D. W., Cemetery
Bass Cemetery	McDonald Cemetery
Bassfield Catholic Cemetery	McInnis, Sarah, Cemetery
Bassfield City Cemetery	McInnis Cemetery
Bay Springs City Cemetery	McMillan Cemetery
Big Creek Cemetery	Mendenhall Cemetery
Brady Cemetery	Midway Cemetery
Brandon Cemetery	Morristown Cemetery
Briar Hill Cemetery	Mt. Carmel Cemetery
Carson Cemetery	Mt. Nebo Cemetery
Carter—Miller Cemetery	Mt. Zion Methodist Cemetery
Carterville Cemetery	New Hebron Cemetery
Cedar Grove Cemetery	Oak Grove Baptist Cemetery
Clinton Cemetery	Old Ebenezer & Barnes Cemetery
Chance Cemetery	Oral Cemetery
Columbia City Cemetery	Pelahatchie Cemetery
Deen Cemetery	Prentiss Cemetery
Ditch Cemetery	Providence Cemetery
Double Churches & Victory	Quick Cemetery
Baptist Cemetery	Raleigh Cemetery
Evergreen Cemetery	Rawles Cemetery
Dublin Cemetery	Sam Hood Cemetery
Eaton Cemetery	Santee Cemetery
Fellowship Cemetery	Stewart Cemetery
Florence Cemetery	Sullivan, Alex, Cemetery
Graham Cemetery	Sullivan, Thomas F., Cemetery
Hathorn Cemetery	Sullivan, Tom, Cemetery
Hattiesburg Cemetery	Summerland Cemetery
Hebron Cemetery	Terrell Cemetery
Hebron Cemetery	Thompson Cemetery
Holder Cemetery	Tom Cole Cemetery
Holder M. E. Church Cemetery	Tyrone Cemetery
Hopewell Presbyterian Church Cemetery	Unknown Cemetery
Hubbard Cemetery	Unknown Cemetery
Huff Cemetery	Unknown Cemetery
King, Johnnie, Cemetery	Waltman Cemetery
King, Marion, Cemetery	Wesleyanna Cemetery
Lake Como Baptist Cemetery	White Sands Cemetery
Loflin Cemetery	Woodlawn Cemetery
Magee City Cemetery	Zion Baptist Cemetery
Magee—Sullivan Cemetery	Zion Hill Cemetery
McDonald Cemetery	

Reprinted from *Cemetery Census*
Compiled by Mrs. Archie Pickering and
Mrs. Mart Rogers (Lucille Skehan), 1976.

Cemetery Census was begun by Mrs. Pickering and Mrs. Rogers as a personal effort to locate the burial places of some of their relatives. The book has been very informative to many genealogists in our area. The following, written by Mrs. Pickering, gives a perspective on the writing of the book.

“Mrs. Rogers and I started out looking for our husbands’ people. We would go to a certain cemetery and find the certain name we wanted. Then as the family lines branched out and we needed certain names that we had seen in those cemeteries, we would make more trips back to those same cemeteries we had visited. We found so many of the old cemeteries disappearing that we started hunting all the old cemeteries in Covington County, thus resulted this book.

“Since our ancestors did not stay in one place, but moved around, we followed them to about eighty cemeteries, not in Covington County. So we included them in the latter part of this book. We did not get complete copies of each of these, just the ones containing a good many of our ancestors.

“We hope this book will help you in your hunt for your ancestors.” (The book is available at the Blackwell Memorial Library, Collins, MS 39428.)

COVINGTON COUNTY AT A GLANCE 1985

NAME:

Named for General Leonard Covington, killed in the War of 1812.

COUNTY SEAT:

Collins (1906)

COURTHOUSE BUILT:

1907-1908

ACREAGE:

266,240 (416 square miles)

ASSESSMENT:

\$56 million

POPULATION:

15,927 (1980)

LABOR FORCE:

5,970 (1982)

REGISTERED VOTERS:

12,139 (March 1985)

MUNICIPALITIES:

Collins, Mayor V. O. Smith, population 2,460

Mount Olive, Mayor Hugh Warren, population 993;

Seminary, Mayor Lawrence Hemeter, population 375.

SCHOOLS:

Collins Elementary School, Principal Herman Campbell, enrollment: 643;

Collins High School, Principal Jack Bailey, enrollment: 384

Collins Junior High School, Principal Larry Tripp, enrollment: 544

Hopewell Attendance Center, Principal Irvin Keys, enrollment: 306

Mount Olive Attendance Center, Principal Ramon Johnston, enrollment: 589

Seminary Attendance Center, Principal Billy Ray Smith, enrollment: 748.

HOSPITAL:

Covington County Hospital (1951), 82 beds

NEWSPAPERS:

Mount Olive Tribune, 1937

The News Commercial, 1901

RADIO STATION:

WKNZ-FM

BANKS:

Covington County Bank (1975)

Mount Olive Bank (1901)

State Bank and Trust Company (1934)

POST OFFICES:

Collins, (1899) Postmaster Melvin R. Banks

Mount Olive, (1857) Postmaster Sammy Jo Crawford

Seminary, (1858) Postmaster Jimmy M. Wallace

OFFICIALS:

Sheriff—Carl H. Leonard

Chancery Clerk—Lynn Mayfield

Circuit Clerk—Maxine Williamson

Tax Assessor—Lucy M. Leonard

Coroner and Ranger—Billy King

County Public Defender—J. Larry Buffington

SUPERVISORS:

1st District—Charles K. Drennan

2nd District—Marson Trigg

3rd District—Allison Mooney

4th District—Dan Easterling

5th District—Wiley Tom Wade

JUSTICE COURT JUDGES:

Cecile Perkins

Howard Folkes

CONSTABLES:

Bobby Beasley

Harvey Crosby

Billy Shoemake

Billy Stuckey

Ted Clark

Year	Census:	County Population	
	Total	White	Non-white
1820	2,230	1,824	406
1830	2,551	1,849	702
1840	2,717	1,861	856
1850	3,338	2,222	1,116
1860	4,408	2,845	1,563
1870	4,753	3,106	1,647
1880	5,993	4,034	1,959
1890	8,299	5,314	2,980
1900	13,076	8,471	4,605
1910	16,909	11,685	5,224
1920	14,869	10,593	4,276
1930	15,028	10,665	4,363
1940	17,030	11,743	5,287
1950	16,036	10,823	5,213
1960	13,637	8,896	4,741
1970	14,002	9,426	4,576
1980	15,927	NA	NA

NA — Not Available

Assistance in preparing this report was given by Randa Mayfield, Nancy King, Maxine Williamson, and Analyn Goff.

RESOURCES

INDIVIDUALS

Acord, Bob	Eubanks, Tammy Lynn	McDonald, Minnie Lee
Allred, Jessie Day	Faler, Jackie Pickering	McGrew, Pauline
Allred, Joann	Flynt, Elton	McLaurin, Evelyn Knight
Allred, Wallace	Folkes, Howard	McNeil, Sheri Straub
Anderson, Gale	Fowler, Mark	McQueen, Mrs. Rozzie
Arrington, Jamie	Gaddy, Dr. Shaw	Magee, Willie V.
Arrington, Mrs. James D.	Gandy, Billy	Markert, Woody
Aultman, Cathy	Gatewood, Polly	Marler, Mrs. Lealand
Aultman, Dan	Geiger, Edith	Massengale, Myrtle
Aultman, Mrs. Ray	Girley, Owen C.	Mayfield, Louise
Aultman, W. T.	Girley, Vergia Watts	Mayfield, Lynn
Baker, Fred	Goff, Analyn	Mayfield, Randa Ray
Barnes, Elva	Goff, Jimmy	Miller, Ada
Barnes, Fred	Grady, W. L.	Mitchell, Nelda Spell
Barnes, James	Grady, Mrs. W. L.	Mitchell, Rex
Barron, Annie	Graham, Barbara	Moffett, Morrell
Barron, B. H.	Hamill, Bob	Moore, Coot
Beasley, Everett C.	Harper, Herbert	Mullins, Buster
Beasley, Sandy	Harper, Judy Knight	Napier, Ramon
Bishop, Jim	Hemeter, Lawrence	Newton, Mackie
Booth, Rev. Hubbard	Herring, Mrs. Robert	Nicovich, Dan
Booth, Mamie	Herrin, Sam	Norris, Robert
Bozeman, Ed	Herrin, Mrs. Sam	Padgett, Mary Nell
Breland, Ruth McInnis	Hitt, Carter	Pape, W. C.
Brown, Ruth Massengale	Hitt, Irving	Perry, Rachel
Bullock, Mrs. Melvin	Hitt, Oliver	Peterson, Clara
Burnham, Mary	Ingram, Buford	Pickering, Allen
Calhoun, Charles	Ingram, Mrs. Buford	Pickering, Archie
Calhoun, Mrs. Charles	Ingram, Rose	Pickering, Ercell
Calhoun, Mrs. Garland	Johnson, Pam	Pickering, Idell Pride
Campbell, Beatrice	Johnson, Paula	Pickering, James
Campbell, Herman	Jordan, Dale	Pickering, Myrtis
Campbell, Mrs. Herman	Jordan, Isabell	Pittman, Bob
Campbell, V. O., Sr.	Jordan, Winnie Mae Napier	Polk, Margie Ramsey
Campbell, Mrs. V. O., Sr.	Kay, David	Purser, Mrs. Billy
Canfield, Esma Graham	Kelly, Gladys	Purser, Rev. Billy
Carr, William	Kelly, Peggy	Ramsey, Betty
Carr, Mrs. William	Keys, Clifton A., Jr.	Ramsey, Charlie, Sr.
Childress, Kathryn Pickering	Keys, Clifton A., Sr.	Ramsey, Mrs. Charlie, Sr.
Clark, Dewitt	Keys, Doyle	Ramsey, Ralph
Clark, Earl	Keys, Irvin	Rawls, Sadie
Clark, Mrs. Earl	Keys, Mollene	Redmon, John
Clark, Eva	Keys, Roanoke Rogers	Redmon, Mrs. John
Clark, James	King, Billy	Rhymes, Holden
Clark, Queenie	King, Jack	Riles, Jessie Graham
Collins, Judy Huff	King, Nancy	Robertson, W. C.
Connerly, Janice Kervin	Knight, Daniel	Robertson, Mrs. W. C.
Corley, Ray	Knight, Ethel	Robinson, Lisa
Coulter, Nanny C.	Knight, Sylvester	Rogers, Bob
Cranford, Mrs. Velna	Lee, Flossie	Rogers, Jimmy
Crosby, Aaron	Lee, Mrs. Morris	Rogers, Jim Reese
Crosby, Mrs. Lessie	Lightsey, Pauline	Rogers, Mrs. Jim Reese
Crump, Mrs. Jessie Ramsey Alexander	Lindsey, Drunella	Rogers, Mattie Lou
Dees, Ransom	Loftin, Mrs. Claude	Rogers, Margaret Howard
Dent, William	Logan, Mrs. Virgil	Rogers, Melva Jean
Dickinson, Irene	Lott, Mrs. Orland	Rogers, Reba
Dobbs, Frank	Lott, Sandra Shoemake	Rogers, Ruby
Dobbs, Judy Carter	Lowery, Wilmer	Rogers, Tommy Bott
Drummond, Laura	Lucas, Anna	Ross, Olon
Dunagin, Vondell Lee	McCann, Ruth	Rutland, Cooper Hamilton
Easterling, Cecil	McCleandon, Bobby	Rutland, Maxine Biglane
Ellis, Margaret Pickering	McDaniel, Donna	Sanders, Elizabeth
Ellis, Steve	McDaniel, Dorothy Abercrombie	Sanford, Blanche
Ellzey, Ronald	McDonald, Rev. Claiborne	Sanford, Charlie

Sanford, Rachel
Sanford, Ralph
Sanford, Mrs. Ralph
Schimpf, LaNelle
Shoemake, Glenn
Shoemake, Sam
Shoemake, Mrs. Sam
Shows, Curtis
Shows, Helen
Skehan, Lucille Rogers
Smith, Dorothy Arrington
Smith, Gertrude
Smith, Mrs. M. L.
Smith, Percy
Smith, V. O.
Speed, Dianne Dunagin
Speed, Hudson
Speed, Kathryn Belle Rogers
Speed, Lloyd
Speed, Roger Burkett
Speed, Vivian
Spell, Ella
Spell, Joe
Steele, Sybil Bryant
Stephens, Betty
Stephens, Hayden
Stevens, Kevin
Swilley, Dwan
Tarbutton, Dick
Thompson, Homa
Thompson, Velma
Thaxton, Mrs. R. C.
Thurman, Vera Blount
Tisdale, Jim
Trigg, Lucy Bullock
Tripp, Larry
Tucker, Margaret
Upton, Mrs. Louie
Vaughn, Dot McGee
Wade, June
Wade, R. T.
Wade, Mrs. Troy
Wallace John
Walton, Howard
Watts, Willie
Wertz, Sharon
Wheeler, Evelyn McCann
Williamson, Maxine
Willoughby, W. R.
Willoughby, Mrs. W. R.
Wilson, Hezzie
Windsor, Jerry
Winfield, Jake
Woolwine, Wayne

WORKS PROJECTS**ADMINISTRATION WRITERS**

(Obtained from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History)

Broom, Donna
Boyd, Jewel
Flynt, Viola
Finch, Anselm J.
Giles, Mrs. D. W.
James, Pat
Jordan, Ruby Huff
Pittman, Maggie
Rogers, Mrs. Nathan Rogers

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES**Clarion-Ledger/Jackson Daily News**

Hancock, Jack. "Collins Survives." May 1, 1949.
McIntire, Carl. "Mt. Carmel." September 20, 1970.

Hattiesburg American

Johnson, Pam. "Hot Coffee." March 1984.
Johnson, Pam. "Mount Olive." January 16, 1984.
Wertz, Sharon. "Lux." March 27, 1984.
Wertz, Sharon. "Roots." February 17, 1985.

The Progressive Farmer

Speed, Mrs. W. W. "Leaf River Church." November 1940.

State Times

Pittman, Bob. "For James Arrington." August 11, 1957.

BOOKS

Bettersworth, John K. *Mississippi: The Land and The People*. Steck-Vaughn Company, Austin, Texas. 1981.
Knight, Ethel. *The Echo of the Black Horn*. 1969.
Pickering, Mrs. Archie and Rogers, Mrs. Mart. *Cemetery Census*. 1976.
Sledge, Broox. "The Post Office History of Covington County." 1955.
Sullivan, Chester. *Sullivans Hollow*. University Press of Mississippi. 1978.
Windsor, Jerry. *Seminary, Mississippi*. 1973

Copies of ***Covington Crossroads*** are currently
available for \$20 at

Collins Florist, Main Street, Collins, MS

Morgan's on Main, Main Street, Collins, MS

The News Commercial, Collins, MS

To purchase by mail contact
gwenkhitt@aol.com

or Gwen Hitt, 110 Herrin Dees Road
Collins, MS 39428

or 601.517.4438.

Cost is \$20 plus \$5 for shipping.

(Reprinted with no edits November 2012.)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gwen Keys Hitt, was born at the Laurel General Hospital in Laurel, Mississippi in 1944, that being the closest hospital to where her parents, Roanoke Rogers and Clifton Keys lived in Covington County. She was educated at Salem High School (grades 1-8), Collins High School (grades 9-12), Jones Junior College and Mississippi State College for Women (MUW).

After receiving a degree from the "W" in vocal and choral music, she married Irving Hitt of Laurel and they moved to Louisville, Kentucky where they both obtained degrees from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Her work experience includes: choral teacher at du Pont Manual High School in Louisville, mental health worker, radio news director, newspaper correspondent for the Biloxi-Gulfport *Daily Herald*, and minister of music in three Mississippi churches (Salem at Collins, Big Level at Wiggins, and Williamsburg at Collins). She is presently a teacher of the gifted at the Collins Junior High School.

Her writing experience includes the books: *CHURCH MUSIC, RFD*, and *WE SHALL COME REJOICING, A HISTORY OF MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CHURCH MUSIC*. She is also a regular contributor to the music publication "Glory Songs."

Gwen and Irving are the parents of two sons, Oliver, age 14, and Carter, age 9. Irving is the administrator of the Covington County Hospital and they live on a cattle farm in the Salem Community.

